

New York Illustrated

A HOME WEEKLY

Vol IX NEW YORK, MAY 4, 1878. No 425

ISLAM.
BY T. C. HARRAUGH.

Thy sun is sinking, Islam; fast
About thee falls the night;
Thy horoscope hath long been cast.
The hand that leaves thee but thy Past,
Appareth now in sight.

Like vultures to a carrion feast
Fast thy despoilers come,
As fierce as yonder striped beast,
Which, in the jungles of the East,
Is tyrant of his home.

No longer stems thy turbaned horde,
The tide of Northern war;
The prestige of thy potent word,
The red gleams of Mohammed's sword
Sink with thy sinking star!

On Stamboul's minarets shall fall
The ruin of decay;
The lonely heron soon may call
Her truant brood from crumpled wall
Throughout the twilight gray.

Ah! thou shalt never rise again!
Thy glories disappear!
Thy muzzins and thy "allahs" vain!
How fast thy haughty precincts wane
Before the Russian bear!

Forsaken, thou canst chew the husk,
This is thy day of woe;
A shadow falls upon the mosque,
And in the chambers of Kiook
The footsteps of the foe!

Where is thy greatness, Islam?—where?
Hast thou of it been shorn?
The wolves of Europe never spare;
Thy vitals now they seek to tear
As Poland's once were torn.

In darkness fades thy latest day;
Thy board is in the dust;
Kingdoms and rulers pass away,
And we, as gazing at thee, say
That Deity is just!

The Pretty Puritan: OR, The Mystery of the Torn Envelope. BY "A PARSON'S DAUGHTER."

CHAPTER IX.
"LOVE BEGINS TO SICKEN AND DECAY."

The second floor of a quiet little house in Philadelphia, consisted of a suite of rooms hand-some as costly and tasteful appointments could make them. The parlor, the elegant boudoir, and the private bath-room, were marvels of elegance compared with the old-fashioned and Quakerish simplicity which marked the other apartments of the house. But then there was no more connection between the different suits of rooms than between their occupants.

Mrs. Smith, a precise old Quaker widow, and her elderly, precise maiden daughter, owned the house, and to eke out their small income had leased their second floor to a young married couple—a shy little flower-fair woman and a bold, dark-eyed, handsome man.

After these people had lived a year within this quiet dwelling, Miss Smith remarked to her mother that she regretted that they had given a two-years' lease to the parties.

"Why, 'Becca?' the old lady asked, placidly. "They have ever paid us the rent promptly, and thou, thyself, sayest what a gentle little woman is Mrs. Torrence; and the man is mostly away; and I am sure thee hast never complained that the waiter from the hotel made dirt upon the stairs, when he brings the meals."

"No, it's not the dirt, mother, nor any trouble. It is that the husband is so seldom here. I can but think there must be something wrong about him."

"Nay, nay, 'Becca, thou shouldst not think evil of thy neighbors."

"But it's hard not to, mother; and Mrs. Torrence mopes and grieves so when he is away, and he is now often and longer away. I declare I would like to know what's the matter."

"Seek not to know others' affairs, until they need thy help, my daughter. The little woman told me this morning, when I met her upon the stairs and she stopped to ask after my health, that she expected her husband home to-night."

"Home?" "Aye, to the hotel, where he has his room, pale moquet carpets, trailed over with garlands of flowers as delicately blue and as faintly pink as forget-me-nots and the woody arbutus, pale silken hangings of the inner hue of a sea-shell, and the color of turquoise, satin furniture to match in gilded framework, frosty laces, and dainty pictures, and gleaming statuettes, garnished these rooms called—"home."

But if "home is where the heart is," those rooms were growing less and less a home to Alan Torrence and Elise.

The girl's heart was always with Alan; and he was now, as Miss Smith had remarked, often and long away from her; for his affection for her was already growing cold.

A man professionally irreligious and unscrupulously worldly, accustomed to denying himself no caprice that promised him passing gratification, Alan Torrence had indulged to the full his fancied love for the pretty little Puritan. He had bound Elise to himself with a tie that she was powerless to break, only to keep her in seclusion, while he lived another life, quite apart from hers, daring not to betray their alliance to the world.

A great poet has written:
"Alas! the love of women! it is known
To be a lovely and a fearful thing."

And again:
"Man's love is of man's life a thing apart,
The woman's whole existence."

And Elise was rapidly verifying these truths in her personal experience. She loved Alan Torrence with all the intensity and utter self-abandonment of a morbid, girlish nature like hers, fettered by no other strong ties of affection, and sustained by no fixed principles nor fervent faith; and this love, having one only object, and constituting the entire depth and circumference of her existence, was capable of



Elise lifted her tear-filled eyes and asked, piteously, "Alan, do you not love me?"

suffering the most exquisite torture through the every outlet and inlet of its life.

From the first, she had unquestioningly submitted to Alan. He had said that in his own time—and as soon as practicable—he would introduce her among his friends as his wife. She, herself, would see that it would be impossible for her ever to approach her old life, and the friends she had deserted and deceived; but in the gay social circles of New York she should one day be the brightest star, though for the present they must live in strictest seclusion, and she must have no *confidante*, no correspondent, no friend, no acquaintance, even, but himself, for him she must sacrifice all things!

And Elise had wound her pretty arms about his neck, and nestled her curly head upon his bosom, and feasting her beauty-worshipping eyes upon Alan's handsome face, had told him that that was an easy sacrifice to make!

Ah! so it was then! Her whole existence was bound up in Alan's. He was her one source of happiness, and she desired none other; and gave never a thought to those who had cared for her from her infancy; those she had cruelly wronged. Indeed, of voluntarily revealing her history to her friends she had never dreamed.

In their very midst, she had borne her secret without a thought of betraying it. How much less, now, could she confess to them all! Besides, what did they care whether or not she was happy, or what had become of her? she reasoned. They had all conspired to make her unhappy, even Rachel; and Rachel was the only person who had ever been a real companion to her.

Her mother had only cared for her as an object at whom she could fret and moralize; and though she had kissed her father, nightly, for years, that kiss had been but a cold form. She never remembered when he had caught her in his arms, and tumbled her curly hair, and wasted kisses on her little face. He had been no more to her than any other grave, elderly man of business, save that she had been taught to call him father. And she had had no crowd of brothers and sisters to brighten her life and fill it with tender ties. Indeed, her home had always held too much of stern, rigid, religious discipline, and too little of mirth, and pursuit of the beautiful, and mercy, and love, and tender confidences, for Elise to think of it longingly and regretfully, in the first rapturous bliss of life with Alan.

For, at first, this life was one golden dream. She was surrounded with every beauty and luxury that could be crowded into her little home; night after night she went to theater, opera, and concert; and through the summer days Alan improvised many a short delightful trip to spots famous for their scenery; and always, night and day, Alan's love was her fount of bliss. But, as the months went by, Alan was with her less and less, and when he was absent she could get no enjoyment from her paintings nor her statuary, her music nor her books; her heart was not in them, unless he shared them with her, but mourned ceaselessly for his mate. Morning after morning she took her lonely walk and idled away the weary days as best she could; night after night, she wept through weary hours. Then, sometimes, when the morning found her languid and feverish, her mind would wander dreamily back to such days in childhood, when her mother's face had worn a look of unwonted kindness and anxiety, and her hands had rested tenderly upon the little hot brow, and Rachel had stolen into the quiet room and kissed and petted her.

Poor little Elise! Only through terrible heart-bitterness, like many another erring soul, was she to learn that the paths of rectitude, however hard to follow, are the only paths of peace.

But Alan would come again—and with him joy. For him Elise was all sunshine and bright-heartedness; he had once told her, sternly, that

he wished to hear no complaints; she must be happy, and trust in him; he knew best how to live his own life, and when she could share it all with him. And so, for Alan's sake, Elise concealed the fact that her heart was breaking; though if he had been loving, as a husband should have been, he would have seen in the depths of her brown eyes, and by every line of the fading beauty of her face, that he had garnered this girl's love but through it to render her life a horrible torture.

June had come, and a bright sweet day, and it was to bring Alan. Elise had not seen him since late in March, and she was almost wild with joy. She sung as she went to and fro in her rooms, making them as beautiful as possible, and sat at her piano to play joyous little trills of song. She ordered a store of flowers from the florist, and when the waiter brought her lunch she told him that he was to furnish the choicest of dinners for two. After luncheon she spent hours upon her bath and toilet; leaving her throbbing brows and the bounding pulses at her slender wrists in fragrant washes, and robing her tiny figure in bluish-rose silk. No longer could she wear the pale blues and cool neutral hues that had so become her pink-and-white beauty but two short years ago. But the blushing pink lent a slight color to her white face, and over the exquisite draperies her fair hair poured a rippling flood. She bound it back with rosy ribbon, clasped milky pearls at throat and wrists, and seated herself at the window to watch for the coming of her Love.

CHAPTER X.
UNDECEIVED.

"Oh, Alan! Alan!"

A carriage had rolled up to the door of the little Quaker dwelling and Elise had flown down the stairs to meet the traveler.

"My dear, was it necessary for you to come down here to meet me?" Alan asked, with some annoyance, withdrawing himself from her passionate clasp and leading the way to their own rooms.

"How could I wait a minute, Alan, when I had not seen you in two long, miserable months?"

"I suppose the months were the same length for both of us," he answered, indifferently, throwing himself into an easy-chair.

"If they had been, I think you would have come sooner!" Elise said, with quivering lips, wringing her hands in her efforts to control her heart-sickness.

"It is a pity I came now, if fault-finding is to be my only reception," Alan retorted, impatiently.

The little pink-robed form threw itself into his arms, with wild hysterical sobs and laughter.

"A pity you came now, when I am dying! dying!! to see you! Oh! do not be angry with me! Do you not know that I worship you! That I only live in your presence! Oh, Alan! love!"

With caresses Alan calmed the storm he had raised, and for a brief hour there was happiness. Then their dinner was brought, and Mr. Torrence ordered the waiter to be early with the breakfast, as he wished to take a morning train to New York. Elise dropped her fork, and extended her hands in mute, anguished supplication, her face blanched and her eyes wide with wild pain.

"Well, well," corrected Alan, anxious to avoid a scene at that moment, "bring the breakfast at any hour you choose. Come to think, I will not go back in the morning."

While the waiter packed the *debris* of the dinner, Alan went to Elise's desk to write a note, and she stole to his side and sat there patient and sad. Pulling open a drawer to look for paper, the first article that met his eye was a letter addressed:

"MRS. ELISE P. CHANDOR,
"Southern Hotel,"
"City."

Elise had the previous day employed her time, as she often did, now, in reading the few notes and letters Alan had ever sent her; and this had been left uppermost.

"What consummate folly is this!" cried Alan, angrily. "This should have been destroyed long ago!"

"I could not bear to destroy a line of yours," said Elise, timidly.

"But I certainly did not suppose you were such an idiot as to keep this!" retorted Alan, putting the letter in his pocket and commencing his note.

When the communication was finished, and given to the waiter to post, and they were again alone, Elise dropped upon her knees before Alan's chair.

"Oh! Alan, you did not mean—you surely could not have meant—to return to New York in the morning?"

"Yes, I did; and I must go in the afternoon." "So soon, darling? So soon?" pleaded Elise. "Think! I have not seen you in two months, and you stay with me only one day!"

"I tell you, once for all, that I shall not come again, if I am to be found fault with," replied Alan, impatiently.

Elise dropped her face into her hands and sobbed quietly. Presently she lifted her tear-filled eyes and asked, piteously:

"Alan, do you not love me?"

"Of course I love you, Elise. The proofs of my love are all around you; and I shall come to see you as often as possible. But, I may as well tell you first as last, that you must expect me no more."

Elise looked at him with a strange, startled expression growing upon her face.

"Alan, are you never to take me to New York with you? Never to tell people that I am your wife? Are we never to live together all the time, for years and years, just as we did for a few happy months?"

"You know as well as I do that that is impossible!"

"But is it to be impossible always? A year ago you told me the time would soon come; yet the whole year is past and you still say it is impossible! Oh, Alan! if you do not let me live where you live, and be known as your wife—if you do not keep on loving me, I shall die!"

Alan Torrence pushed the girl from him, paced the floor a few moments, and then came back and placed her on his lap.

"Listen to me, Elise," he said gently, but firmly. "You know that I love you. I have told you so again and again. I repeat it now; but proclaim this fact to the world, and our connection to the world I cannot; for I have been married."

Elise looked into his face, now, with eyes and cheeks so scorching that no tears were left.

"But am I not your wife, Alan?"

"Yes, my darling, you and I know that you are my own dear little wife. But do you suppose the world would believe it, in the face of your history? And do you not know that on your own unsupported word, you are powerless to prove it?"

Elise's eyes still looked burning into his; but her dry, parched lips could utter no sound, not even a moan. Alan went on:

"As long as you love me, and I love you, you shall stay here in this pretty little home, and be my little love, and I will come often to see you. Say, Elise, do you love your Alan yet? Will you keep this little haven always ready for him to find here rest, and comfort, and bliss in your sweet presence?"

"Oh, Alan!" and the girl's hard, woeful voice rose almost to a scream. "What choice have I?—what choice have I? I live only for you."

Without you, your presence, and your love, I should die! So I must stay! I must do anything you say—be anything you choose—since you are my world and my life!"

Alan Torrence had gained his point. He understood Elise's nature well enough, by this time, to be sure that, unlike most women, she would, even in the face of this confession, still yield to his power and dictation. Other women's affections would have lessened with this outrage put upon them; other women would have grown vengeful and asserted themselves against any such plans to keep their lives one long, disgraceful secret. But Alan knew that the sun and substance of Elise's life was her love for him; and though he had already grown tired of the girl's clinging passion, since he had burdened himself with her, he had no choice but to still play upon that love, and keep her in subjection to such of his wishes as would make her the least trouble to him.

Now that he had told her, of what he himself had long known, that he should never proclaim her as his wife, he relapsed into his old-time, most ardent and lover-like tenderness; and under his impassioned caresses, and burning love-words, Elise was faintly happy. Even at their parting, next day, for Alan's sake, she tried to hide her misery. But when he was gone, and she had watched the carriage down the street until she could no longer see it, nor even hear its clatter upon the pavement, she threw herself upon the floor, and buried her wan, white face among the delicate blossoms of the costly carpet and moaned:

"Alan! Alan! Oh, Alan!"

And God pity the woman who wails the name of lover or husband with such utter despair in her voice!

CHAPTER XI.
WILDE MANOR AND ITS GUESTS.

"What success have you met with?—less than you hoped, I see by your faces," cried Miss Gardiner, as Rachel and Eric joined her at the Grand Central Depot.

Mrs. Lysson described the visit to Mrs. Stanford and the conversation that had ensued.

"And now," she concluded, "the hour has come when we must say good-by."

"What? You take to-morrow's steamer!" exclaimed Agnes.

"I think we shall," said Mr. Lysson. "There is so little clew to follow; we only know that a medium-sized man, with dark eyes, and brown hair and beard, and nice voice and manners, came from Baltimore or Philadelphia, to New York, in June, and gave to Mrs. Stanford that envelope. Hundreds of men would answer to such a description; but I shall write to Guy of all that has happened; and if he thinks it possible to trace the person, by means of plausibly worded advertisements, he will probably stay a few weeks in New York upon his way to England. At present, Miss Agnes, I shall bequeath my mantle to you. Since you discovered the envelope I shall return it to you, and let you exercise your detective powers."

"Oh, no; please do not! I can assure you that any efforts of mine to do detective business would prove most ignominious failures; and neither at Wilde Manor nor at home will there be the slightest opportunity for me to learn anything concerning Elise. Besides, it seems to me that Mr. Chandor is the proper person to have this envelope."

"Under ordinary circumstances, Miss Agnes, I should disdain to confess to entertaining the smallest amount of superstition; but the manner in which you came to bring the envelope and its mystery again to light seems so peculiar that must say I have a desire that you should retain possession of it, in the hope that through you may come some further discovery. I will give you this other bit of writing; you see they are not at all alike; and with your permission, send Guy a letter of introduction to you, that if he desires to prosecute further inquiries he may call and get those papers from you in person."

Agnes laughed; yet she felt some little womanly curiosity to see the young Englishman who had lost his bride under such mysterious circumstances.

"Very well; I will consent to become custodian, for the time being, of the documents in question; though I have no faith in your idea that through me will come any further developments concerning this case."

Nevertheless, Miss Gardiner put the papers away in her elegant portmanteau; and as the train which was to bear her back to the gayeties of Wilde Manor moved slowly out of the depot, she wondered, idly, if Mr. Lysson's pre-sentiment could possibly be true; and these papers in some way be connected with her own fate; and she destined to make further discoveries concerning them. Then she thought of Carl Van Alst, and Wilde Manor, and smiled at the improbability of the idea; and with her feet upon a hassock, and a new book open upon her lap, had quite banished such odd fancies, when the train slackened its speed at the river-side station where her journey terminated.

Carl Van Alst was upon the platform, and at just the right car to give Agnes his hand, with a look that said more of welcome than a score of words could have done; and the Wilde's phaeton, with its span of black ponies, waited near. So Carl was to drive her up to the manor, through the sweet-scented, dewy twilight, just as Agnes had imagined he would—for even the best regulated and most orthodox female heart will, occasionally, indulge in such idle dreamings.

"And what have you been doing at the Manor during my absence, Mr. Van Alst?" asked Agnes, when they were cosily ensconced, side by side, and he had given the ribbons to the fleet ponies.

"We have had croquet, and quarts, and shooting, and drives, and rides, and walks, as usual; but all have seemed utterly dull without you, Miss Agnes."

"Or, rather, Miss Rodwell and Marion Dare have been less entertaining than usual, and you, yourself, perhaps, afflicted with an attack of indigestion?"

"Not in the least!" retorted Carl; "that is an unknown malady to me; and the ladies were never more entertaining. By the way, we have

had reinforcements since your departure. Quite a crowd of visitors arrived this morning, and Mrs. Wilde is in her element—though she is devotedly longing for the return of her vicegerent. But even our charming hostess cannot have been as utterly unhappy during your absence as your humble servant."

"That is because she is sustained by the consciousness of duties for those people who have nothing to do but be unhappy, and indulge the feeling as a sort of luxury."

"You are merciless, Miss Agnes. Do you intend me to understand that you condemn my unhappiness?"

"I condemn you in no wise, and I do not believe you know what positive unhappiness is, and you have not told me who the new guests are?" answered Agnes, lightly.

Carl Van Alst's dark brows contracted troublously a moment, but he spoke, gayly: "Have you forgotten the proverbial skeleton in every closet, that you feel so positive that I have never known unhappiness?"

"Yes; or, rather, I hoped you had been an exception," said Miss Agnes, with a sudden charming gentleness and self-reproach.

"Oh, do not think it is that!" he cried, quickly, feeling by instinct that Agnes was thinking of his marriage. "I admired the cousin whose circumstances ordained should be my wife for so brief a season, but I did not love her; and I feel that fate was only kind to both of us in freeing us from the burden of a life-long mistake. No; I had never known love then!"

There was no misunderstanding the intent of this explanation, nor the meaning of the words of Mr. Van Alst's voice as he spoke that last sentence. But when he lightly changed the subject to that of the new guests, Agnes, for the first time, wondered if this man could be only playing at love. Her heart gave a sharp throb of pain for a moment, and then her perfect lips curled disdainfully at the thought of any man trifling with her, or of ever guessing that he had won her preference until he first avowed his own. For Agnes Gardiner, in her proud young womanhood and with her worldly training, was the last person, whether she married for interest or for love, to vulgarly let her motives be seen—to wear her heart upon her sleeve.

"There are Mr. De Lancy, a bachelor very old and very rich; my uncle and father-in-law, Mr. Frederick Van Alst, and John Richmond, and a very insipid little Englishman, Willis Leonard by name."

"And the ladies?" queried Agnes.

"Mrs. Lorrimer, Miss Lorrimer, and Miss Sanfey."

"Miss Lorrimer! Are you at all acquainted with her? Is her name Blanche?" asked Miss Gardiner, with quick interest.

Carl Van Alst carefully scrutinized his companion's face while he seemed only to be watching the ponies, as he answered: "I am acquainted with the family. During my first long stay in New York I used to visit there somewhat, and Miss Lorrimer's name is Blanche. May I ask if you are acquainted with her?"

"Not in the least—I never saw her until last evening; she was at Thomas's with a little brunette and a fine-looking elderly gentleman."

"My uncle and Isalene Sanfey, doubtless; both young ladies are his wards. Were you attracted by Blanche's beauty? She is considered rather unusually beautiful."

"Yes, I thought her so; but her chief attraction to me is the fact that she was a school-chum of a young lady in whom I am greatly interested. I quite long to make Miss Lorrimer's acquaintance."

"And you will speedily have the opportunity," said Carl, giving the ponies a cut that sent them flying faster toward a possible discovery of a new clew to Elise Chandor's fate. I have not told you the latest sensation, he continued, as they neared the manor gates.

"Mrs. Wilde gives a lawn-party to-morrow, with afternoon tea, a dance, and supper after the ball. Besides the guests at the manor, all of the best families about here are invited."

"Mrs. Wilde's first lawn-party of the season! It is sure to be pleasant; her parties always are."

"I shall enjoy it, if you promise me at least half a dozen dances; otherwise I shall be bored to death."

"You are most moderate in your demands! I will promise three—no more, and two waltzes—and trust that you will survive."

"How cruel you are! Nevertheless, I receive smallest favors gratefully at your hands; and if you enjoy yourself, I shall find enjoyment in watching you. Do you know that acquaintance with you has added quite a new and blissful flavor to my life, Miss Agnes?"

"How could I know it? But I am sure it is a pleasant thing to learn. Is it because I enjoy myself?"

"It is because you are so thoroughly fresh and vigorous in mind and body. You afford a man such charming mental companionship and you fairly fascinate him with your capacity for purely physical happiness. It seems as if the mere fact of existence were a joy to you."

"I believe it is," laughed Agnes, "when the air is clear and I have had a pleasant ride!"

And she sprang from the phaeton upon the marble steps at Wilde Manor, where her hostess waited to welcome her, and carry her away to the delicious little dinner that was being served for her in the cozy little breakfast-room.

While she ate her dinner, Miss Gardiner's thoughts reverted to the subject that the proximity of the Lorrimer kept vivid. These people had known Elise—and had entertained her at their home during one of the gayest seasons of life in town. Might not Elise have formed some friendship there that had influenced her future?

True, Miss Lorrimer had written Rachel that she had known no gentleman paying attention to Elise, nor of Elise writing to any one but her own family. But how did they know that Miss Lorrimer was to be trusted? Might not Blanche, herself, feel in a degree responsible for some unfortunate misunderstanding Elise had formed, and so deny all knowledge of it?

Agnes longed to question Miss Lorrimer, and the chance to do so was afforded her in a very few minutes after she had donned an evening dress and appeared in the drawing-room. The two ladies were introduced, just as Miss Lorrimer had left the piano for a seat near the window.

"Will you not sit here?" Blanche asked, moving to one end of the little tete-a-tete. As Miss Gardiner accepted the seat, she added: "Is it not quite odd, Miss Gardiner, that we should meet again so soon?"

"After our two encounters last evening?—yes; and I am particularly glad that it has happened so, for the lady friend who was with me recognized you as having been a room-mate of her sister at Vassar."

"You do not mean Elise Wallbridge?"

"Yes; the lady with me was Mrs. Lyson."

"Then you know Elise? You can tell me all about her—where she is?"

"No, I had hoped that, possibly, you could tell me."

The two young women regarded each other silently for a moment, Agnes with steady, intent gaze, Blanche with glowing hauteur.

"I think," said Blanche, coolly, breaking the silence, "that you must have made some mistake regarding me."

"I think I have, and I ask your pardon," responded Miss Gardiner, gracefully. Already she was convinced that Blanche Lorrimer was innocent of any knowledge of her chum's fate.

"I had only hoped that having been Elise's friend, once, you had at some time become her confidante, and could help me to some knowledge of the secret of her life."

"The secret of her life—if you cannot tell me about her, nor where she is?" asked Blanche wonderingly.

"I can tell you a little—if you care to know," and, briefly, Agnes related Elise's history, ending with her belief that Elise had been coerced into an elopement with some former lover.

"Poor little Elise! She was such a gentle little thing! I cannot understand it. Certainly she could not have been in love while I knew her!" Miss Lorrimer asserted, positively.

"The whole matter is enveloped in a dreadful mystery, and so painful a one that you will be so kind as to keep it an inviolable secret."

"Most certainly," said Blanche, gravely. And the two young ladies sauntered away, leaving a listener behind the lace draperies that had sheltered their seat, whose face was ablaze with furious hate and passion.

Isalene had stepped from the marble veranda into the bay-window, intending thus to enter the parlor, when the conversation being carried on, the other side of the curtains, arrested her steps, and riveted her attention so completely that she was quite oblivious of the fact that Carl Van Alst had followed, to speak with her, and stood just without the window-frame, puffing upon a cigar, and admiring her statueque attitude.

"So that is what has become of her!" Isalene whispered fiercely, as Agnes Gardiner concluded her story of Elise. "Could it have been Alan she ran away with? She certainly loved him—and he her! Her! An insipid little Puritan, instead of me! I wish I could kill them both, or rather discover their secret and proclaim it to the world!"

The little Cuban fairly hissed the last words between her tiny clenched teeth, and the man who heard them involuntarily recoiled from this exhibition of a girl's hot, vindictive hatred.

He tossed away his cigar, and went quickly back along the veranda, to the brilliantly-lighted hallway.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 423.)

One of Life's Tragedies.

BY JENNIE DAVIS BURTON.

EMPHATICALLY a woman's room, all green tints and mother-of-pearl, with the golden pipes of an organ going up to the domed roof, and the girl, whose bower of beauty this had been, looking around upon that familiar scene for the last time.

"Oh, dear, dear," moaned poor aunt Agnes, weeping piteously. "I don't know how you feel, Rose Mabel, but I'd as soon the coffin-lid shut down atop of me."

A shiver went over Rose Mabel, and she became conscious of Dillaye's eyes upon her.

"What do you think about it?" he asked, as he drew her away toward the stairs. "Because a great pile of bricks has tumbled down and brought us with it, we are not to be comforted by some compensating good?"

"Don't ask me," impatiently. "I can't feel resigned; but to die, to go out into the cold and darkness, to molder away and be nothing but the dust under men's feet—I can't bear to think of it!"

"Well, but in life," he urged. "In going to work bravely and building the splendid edifice up again. I confess that I like this idea of carving out my own destiny, of taking fate into my own hands and proving myself the conqueror. Which will you do, Rose—share the glory of the station outside, or I will give you the money if you will get me out of the house. I should be afraid to struggle for my kingdom, afraid of being one of the conquered. I will wait."

"But you would fall to my share and I would be merciful," he said, with that overmastering flash in his eyes, which kept her still and drained the blood from her face as it had done the first time she had seen it there, months before.

It was when the first shadow of the coming disasters fell upon them. There was a gay company in her uncle's parlors, and his young business partners, Dillaye and Mark Colton, among them. Suddenly she saw the latter grow white to the lips.

"Miss Elworthy?" said he, bending and smiling for the first while the abject terror in his eyes reserved for her sight alone. "I am a defaulter for fifty thousand dollars. I came here to-night to keep clear of suspicion until I could get away, but I am too late unless you help me. Dobbins, the cashier, has just gone into the study with your uncle, and there's a policeman stationed outside. I will give you the money if you will get me out of the house. I have had the weight of dishonesty on my conscience long enough; all I ask is a chance to escape."

Impelled by woman's sympathy, she had almost succeeded in opening the way for him, when Dillaye appeared, blocking up their course.

"I will not be taken alive," gasped Colton, desperately.

"Very well then, dead if you prefer," said Dillaye, with the utmost coolness, without an effort to snatch away the weapon which the detected man had turned upon himself.

Some one else did it in time to divert the ball from its deadly aim. Rose Mabel was carried out in strong hysterics, and exhibited symptoms of a relapse the next time she met Dillaye.

"After he had made restitution, when you knew he would have killed himself!" was her indignant reproach.

"Justice is justice all the same."

Woe to the creature dependent upon his mercy, thought she.

Very different from the grand mansion she had left was the compact, plain old house, to which Rose Mabel was returning, after a five years' absence.

"How she will feel the change," said sister Tresey, as the time of her arrival drew near. "I wish it was a brighter day. It will be hard enough for poor Mab without seeing the worst side of us, as she will do under such dreary clouds."

"Your sister must remember that we made a sacrifice for her," said their mother, but Tresey saw some of her own uneasiness reflected in the placid face.

The rain began to fall in a monotonous drip, the budding shrubs and early crocuses in the garden could not redeem the outlook from utter dreariness, and in the midst of it Tresey flew to the door, and threw her arms about the tall figure in its damp wrappings, amid which the pale, weary face was imperfectly visible.

"Now you have kissed mother, come straight up to my room, Mab. I want you all to myself for five minutes before supper."

"What a cozy nest it is," said Rose, when she was divested of her wet wraps and seated in the glow of the firelight, which brought out a glimmer in her russet-brown hair, and lit the wine-dark eyes shining forth from a flawless face.

Tresey watched her with eager devotion.

"Dr. Winter told us what a reigning queen you were," said she, "but he didn't do you half justice, after all. He made me afraid you would not be content with this quiet home after that splendid one."

"It seems like just now. Does he come here often?"

"Who? Oh, Rand Winter? Yes, very often. And Mab, dear, he says that Mr. Dillaye is one of the grandest men he ever knew."

No answer. Rose was staring into the fire with an expression on her smiling face which somehow chilled Tresey's ardor. The former observed the change after a moment, and began talking.

"You winsome little thing! Where do you get all your brightness? It is easy to see that you are the sunshine of the house. One could almost believe in absolute happiness after a look into your eyes."

"Why not?" laying her crimson cheek against the other's shoulder. "I am going to be married soon," she whispered.

A little start; then rigidity stole over Rose Mabel, though she forced herself to speak lightly.

"That is the secret, eh? And who is the man so blessed—Rand Winter? Is it that brings him here so often?"

"What an idea! Rand isn't a marrying man. Has his mother and two sisters to support, you

know, and it was only by good luck he got to attend those lectures in the city, last winter. He is a hard worker. Father made it a special request that he should see something of you and uncle Ashley, or I suppose he'd hardly have taken the time." And then Tresey drifted to her own affairs until the tea-bell rung.

It was remarkable how very little confidence Rose managed to return without exciting the suspicion of intentional reserve. She was more drawn out at the table. Her father's mind was full of the failure of Ashley & Co., and Rose had to answer his questions.

"A clear smash-up, and your uncle so desponding that he isn't likely ever to hold his head up again. A bad thing, a bad thing! Why couldn't he stop when he had enough? Seems to me your rich people are the ones who go into the greatest craze after money. Slow but sure and enjoy as you go along, that's my motto. So, Dillaye has taken all the responsibility upon himself. Shows pluck, but I shouldn't wonder from all I hear if he finds his hands full. Ain't sorry after such a wreck to get back into a safe harbor, are you, Rose Mabel?"

"Sorry! I wish with all my heart I had never left it!"

Not her words so much as the passionate voice startled every one there. Then they remembered how close this was to her own heart, how they had given her up for her own good when childless uncle Ashley came with his proposition to adopt Rose as his heiress, and now they measured her feelings by theirs. Five years lost from their loving home hearts; of course they shared their regret for them!

Spring opened up swiftly that year. It was more like May than an April day when Rose drove to the station for an expected visitor. The household were surprised to see her come back alone. She was still standing upon the steps, flushed from the drive and radiant with an exhilaration of spirits which made indoors seem irksome, when Dr. Winter rode up.

"A dispatch for you, Miss Elworthy. The messenger missed you at the station, it appears, and my happening in this direction saved him a trip."

"Expect me in two hours, DILLAYE," read Rose. "Oh, I suppose he had occasion to stop somewhere on the way. Will not that prospect tempt you to stay for the evening, Dr. Winter?"

"I came ready to be persuaded," smiled Rand, though the bitter accent which had broken into that question had not escaped him.

It was not the first evening he had passed at the house.

"I have a line from Dillaye," he had announced on that occasion. "He asks me to see that you are not left to fall into the stagnation of dullness."

"Thank Mr. Dillaye for causing you to remember me."

"One cannot be principal he is lucky to be substitute. I am aware of my privilege," said Rand. He felt as if that note had put him upon his honor. If he could have overcome his own difficulties, he could not but have done so for his friend.

The quartette, made by the appearance of Tresey and her lover, were promenading the veranda in the moonlight, two hours later.

The sound of galloping hoofs rang up from the road; in another moment Dillaye sprang from the carriage and stood before them.

"Time!" he called out. "Fifteen seconds to spare. Bravo, Heckla, good old fellow! Miss Elworthy, he would appreciate a lump of sugar from your hand after this feat, I think."

Tresey flew for the sweet, and Rose ran down the steps to stroke the dripping neck of the quivering steed.

"You don't mean that you rode him from the city?"

"Just that. Missed the train, you see, by a hair's-breadth, and I had no choice."

"No choice?"

"I never break faith when I have once pledged my word."

"And you would ride Heckla within an inch of his life for such a trivial promise?"

"What would you do if one were to break faith with you? For my part, I would expect to be killed on the spot."

"Better not try the experiment," jested Dillaye, following after the boy, who appeared to take charge of his horse.

Tresey put her arm about her sister with a squeeze of wordless sympathy when they were alone in their room that night.

"What a trial it was to lose the fortune, and how glad I am for what you have left, Mab. Rand says, that much as he always esteemed Dillaye, the work he is doing now makes him admire him more."

Always lively! Poor Rose Mabel! No wonder Dillaye had first come to her, first coming home, and yes—her own heart acknowledged it, so why should she not tell it—at coming nearer to Rand, should have deserted her. What could she do if he was determined to leave her to Dillaye?

Tresey's wedding was at hand. May now, but it seemed as if April, beguiled of her fair proportion of tears, had bequeathed their burden. The wedding-day was dismal as bride ever saw. Rose shuddered with superstition, and Tresey laid her hand on her sister's arm.

"I shall have Will. No bad luck can come to quite offset that."

Such love and trust! Poor Rose Mabel! Sight of it, somehow, was as depressing as the day.

Dillaye arrived at the last minute. He kissed the bride and put her into the carriage, and went back to the firelit parlor, impatient for the opportunity, which was hours in coming, before he was left alone with Rose. She had seen him at hand, and avoided it while she could.

"Your kingdom next," he began. "Did you imagine I was going to be put off and made to wait? I've worked like a tiger, and here is the result. Look, Rose! Only think of the power these few words will exert upon you. They mean that I am a free man again; the thrill of debt lifted; more than all, Rose, they mean you."

Rose did look, with a flame of angry passion in her eyes. One moment Dillaye stood with his hands on his hips, the next he was snatching them and flung the fluttering heap into the blazing grate-fire. The suddenness of that mad act paralyzed his energies for an instant; then Rose shrank with a cry, turned and fled in utter terror.

The black night closed down, the rain, which had been falling all day, was driven now by intermittent gusts; a break came in the mass of clouds, and Dr. Winter, driving slowly over the heavy country road, was startled indescribably and gloomily in the midst of that loneliness.

"Rand!" the voice sharp with fright. "It is I, Rose. Take me up. Now turn about and drive for your life—for my life. I have ruined Dillaye, and he will kill me!"

Through his wild excitement and incoherence, he succeeded only in understanding that she had some real grounds for fear, and then arose, faintly borne by the wind, the steady, oncoming sound of pursuit.

Rose covered, dumbly. Rand urged on his horse, but the race was too unequal to last; she was shot through the heart.

For Dillaye, the blooded animal he rode gave one tremendous bound at that report, reared under the strong curb, and fell backward with a crashing weight that instantly annihilated the vital spark in that strong man, so lately filled with energy and hope, rejoicing in his well-

earned triumph, and reaching eagerly forward toward the golden dream of youth and love.

"Thank Heaven!" said Rand Winter, as he knelt by his side, feeling how mercifully he had been spared the knowledge that her life had gone by his hand. For Rand never believed he had meant to kill her; he had pity for the fierce, strong love which would have snatched her in spite of herself, and wondered vaguely if, with the differences of life swept away, peace could have come to them both on the other side.

THE MEADOW-PATH.

BY WILLIAM TERNYSON HEATON.

From the lane through the bloom of the clover,
It winds to the sun-kissed stream,
That drifts down the valley forever,
As pure as an angel's dream—
O where the sea-waves are whispering,
And sending back echoes of song
To me as I stand in the pathway
Where the fondest of memories throng.

Memories of days that have perished,
We wandered that happy day,
Dreamings so tenderly cherished,
And bright as the blossoms of May.
They'll bloom 'mid my soul-thoughts forever,
Bedewed by the tear-drops that fall,
And the path that winds down to the river
Other hours seem to recall.

When over the fields in the twilight
We wandered that happy day,
And kissed at the bars in the moonlight
As the waters stole softly away.
The dew of the morning still gleaming
Should perch you on the dewy flowers,
Though of angels my darling is dreaming,
And I of those happier hours.

Joe Phenix, THE POLICE SPY.

A story of the Great City of the Western World in the light and in the shade; in the broad glare of the noonday sun and under the silver beams of the moon; a tale of the men who prey, shark-like, upon their kind, and of the secret blood-hounds of the law, who, through many a devious, winding way, hunt the wily villains down to their dark, dishonored graves.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.

CHAPTER XVII.

CLOSE QUESTIONING.

DRAWING in the oars, the man bent forward and removed the heavy cloth from the mouth of Brocet.

Despite the knowledge that he was no match for the stranger, even if he had had the free use of his arms instead of being so securely hampered by the handcuffs, Brocet attempted to rise, but with a single pressure of his powerful hand the man forced him down.

"Keep quiet!" he cried, sternly, "unless you want me to make you food for the fishes! If I should pick you out of this boat, handcuffed as you are, it wouldn't be long before you would find your way to the bottom."

Despite his cool nerves, Brocet shivered; such a death would indeed be a horrible one, and he had quite sense enough to know that he was helpless in the power of the man who had captured him so skillfully.

"What do you mean by this outrage?" Brocet cried, indignantly, putting on a bold face, although he felt far from being easy in his mind.

"You walked right into the trap, didn't you?" said the stranger, quietly. "I had an idea that I was going to be followed, although I never took the trouble to look around to see whether it was so or not."

"You shall answer to the law for this outrage," Brocet blustered.

"Oh, don't you bother about the law; maybe you'll get all the law you want before you die."

"What do you mean by this assault?"

"Why, I want to have a nice, quiet talk with you," the Texan replied. "And a better spot than this couldn't be found in, or around, this big city. And then, too, if I find you ugly and not disposed to answer my questions, all I've got to do is to drop you overboard, and you'll go to the bottom pretty soon, with those handcuffs on, unless you're a better swimmer than the majority of men are."

"You wouldn't murder me?" Brocet cried.

"No, not if you answer my questions, but if you're inclined to be ugly, you'll find that I can be ugly, too; and I've got you in a fix here so that I can knock you on the head if I take a mind to do it, and toss you overboard without anybody being the wiser."

Again Brocet felt the cold shivers creeping over him; this man seemed as implacable as fate.

"Well, what is it that you wish to know?"

"Oh, quite a number of things! In the first place, who set you on to tracking me to-night?"

"No one," replied Brocet, promptly.

"No, it ain't," replied Brocet, earnestly. "I overheard your conversation to-night with my master, and I followed you, intending to overtake you and see if I couldn't sell you a little information."

"Well, what is it that you wish to know?"

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"Well, what is it that you wish to know?"

"Oh, quite a number of things! In the first place, who set you on to tracking me to-night?"

"No one," replied Bro

the bottle of oil and a small piece of black putty. The saws and file were to cut the irons, the oil to lubricate, and the black putty to fill up the cracks so as to prevent discovery in case of an examination, not too closely made.

"Oh, no, my friend, I need none of these things!" the Frenchman exclaimed; "I am an innocent man and on my trial the truth will come out. You cannot sell me any of these toys." But, even as he spoke, the little, sharp eyes of the "cracksmen" gazed over the delicate instruments, the finest kit of "tools" he had ever seen.

"There is nothing to pay; the captain sent them."

The Frenchman had half a mind to accept, but he feared a trap; the messenger was a stranger and he distrusted him.

"I know nothing of your captain, and you are laying a trap for me, but it won't work, my friend. I am too old a bird to be caught by chaff."

"All right; you can do as you please," and the spy screwed on the boot-heel again.

Hardly had he performed the task when the keeper passed along the corridor and looked into the cell.

"Come, hurry up! You mustn't stay long!" he said; "it's time you were out of this; it's against all the rules, anyway, to have you here, at this hour."

"I came to see the gentleman upon important business and so an exception was made in my favor, but I am ready to go now, unless Mr. Girond has something more to say," and the spy turned to the Frenchman.

The prisoner understood that this was his last chance, but he was too wily a rogue to be caught in the skillfully-laid trap and he only shook his head, so the spy departed.

Then he was conducted to the cell occupied by the Italian, Luca. Cars had been taken to place the confederates in different tiers.

We will not weary the reader with the details of the interview, for the second attempt was but a repetition of the first and equally as unsuccessful.

Finally the Italian refused to answer the signs and denied all knowledge of the "captain."

The clever device of the police authorities had failed; the prisoners were not to be tricked into betraying the leader who stood in the background and planned the evil schemes.

The experiment was not tried upon the woman, for in the beginning it was decided that it would be useless.

During the brief intervals which elapsed between the arrest of the prisoners and their trial, which was hurried forward with all possible speed, the Englishman, exactly a broker, but what is commonly termed a curbstone operator, a man who carried his office in his hat, as the saying is, by the name of Percy, known in Wall street. But the man had utterly disappeared and left no trace behind him. And the police, in spite of their most persistent inquiry, could not even obtain a description of the "operator."

One account said that he was short and fat, with light hair; another declared that he was tall and thin and with black hair; a third said that he was not tall, but broad, and between the two; some believed that he was old, and others that he was a mere boy, and finally the officers giving the matter up in disgust came to a conclusion similar to that regarding the wonderful Mrs. Harris in Dickens's world-famous novel, that there wasn't "a such person."

In due time the prisoners were placed on trial. Judge Jefferson George Washington Jobbins appeared for the defense.

The judge was a character. In the days when the "ring" ruled New York and made things lively for the "boys," he had first been a political lawyer, a strong word leader of the un-terrified voters, whose motto was "vote early and vote often," then he had been elected judge and had presided over the Tombs police-court for quite a long time.

He was the "terror of the evil-doer," so the ever-reliable daily newspapers said, and a stranger happening to stroll into his court would have been astonished at the rapidity with which he disposed of the petty cases brought before him. He knew them all, or at least pretended he did—it was about the same; the culprit's denial amounted to nothing, and the way he imposed the fines and started the poor, ignorant, powerless—politically speaking—wretches to the "island" was a caution. But let one of the "gang" be hauled up and the case was different.

But despite the legal efforts of the judge and his associate counsel, the two men were convicted, although the madame escaped, and were sentenced to Sing-Sing.

The police spy had struck his first blow, and the secret band were staggered by its force.

CHAPTER XIX.
A MODERATELY INTERESTING

Just about one month after the blue rose episode, as related in a previous chapter, the Bohemian knocked at the door of the young girl's room and asked the favor of a few minutes' conversation with her.

Inviting her visitor to enter, she placed a chair for him, and waited in curiosity to learn the purport of his visit.

"My dear Miss Adalia, I come on important business to-night," he said, "and I trust that you will give me your earnest attention."

"Certainly," was a cautious, somewhat surprised at the gravity of his tone and manner.

The Bohemian hesitated for a few minutes before he began, and as he surveyed the girl, thinking over in his mind the best way to deliver the proposition which he had come expressly to make, he could not help remarking how beautiful she was. Never before to his eyes had she appeared so lovely.

"Miss Adalia, I hardly know how to begin," he said at last, "or what I have to say will, I fear, be totally unexpected by you and probably will take you entirely by surprise. You are a most charming young lady, and since I have enjoyed the pleasure of your acquaintanceship, I have gradually learned to like you more and more."

He paused in his speech for a moment, and a slight, beautiful blush began to creep up into the face of the girl. She began to have an idea of the nature of the communication which was about to be made to her, and gladly would she have avoided it if she could have, discovered any possible way of retreat, but she could not, and she felt that, perforce, she must listen.

"Fortune has favored me greatly of late, and that gives me courage to speak, otherwise my lips would have been closed. Miss Adalia, I have come to ask of you the greatest favor that a woman can give to a man—yourself. I love you and I wish to make you my wife."

The girl cast down her eyes and her bosom heaved tumultuously. It was a painful task to refuse even a man for whom she cared absolutely nothing, and for a few moments she hesitated.

No hope, though, did the suitor lover take, for he was a keen reader of faces, and the look which appeared upon the flushed and confused face of the girl told him only too well what the answer would be; but he did not seem to be at all discouraged.

After quite a long pause Adalia lifted up her head and made a reply.

"I trust that you will excuse me, Mr. Percy, if my words give you pain," she said, slowly; "but, as I explained to you some time ago, all my thoughts—all my energies—are devoted to one purpose only."

"Yes, I remember," he replied, taking advantage of her pause to speak. "And that idea is still strong within your mind—you have not given it up?"

"No, I shall never give it up while I live!" she exclaimed. "The purpose is as firmly rooted in

my heart as is the life which there exists, although I fear the time is far distant when I shall set about the task. Without money the attempt is hopeless, and how can I, a single, helpless girl, hope to earn the large sum needed? I know enough of the world to understand that to successfully pursue my purpose money must be spent like water, and now, Heaven help me! it is as much as I can do to procure the means to sustain life. Oh! I think sometimes that I am mad to dream of measuring strength with the powerful, cruel men that so foully wronged the unfortunate victim who in the State prison grieved his life away."

"Why, then, not give up all ideas of such a difficult and dangerous scheme? for if the facts of the case are as you believe them to be, the men who hunted the wretched criminal to his death will be fully desperate and determined to remove you from their path if they discover that there is any likelihood of succeeding in the attempt to bring them to justice."

"Oh! I think nothing of my own life!" the girl asserted. Not for a single instant would I hesitate to sacrifice myself, provided that I could succeed in my task, and I should feel a holy, righteous joy in dying in such a good cause."

All in a glow was the face of the maid, and her beautiful eyes sparkled with light until they outshone the sheen of diamonds.

"You are an enthusiast!" Percy remarked, quietly, but with his keen eyes fully alive to the rare beauty of the sweet, girlish face, and every sense captivated by the subtle charm of her manner.

"But I am only dreaming, I fear," she said, with a sudden change of manner, her nervous excitement giving way to despondency. "It will never be; without a fortune at my back I am helpless, and fortunes are not to be had for the asking."

"Why not then accept the love I proffer?" the Bohemian questioned. "Give up this visionary task, cease from pursuing this life of toil, and find a refuge from all cares with me. I do not ask you to say that you love me; that will come in time; I am content to wait; your heart is free, so you assured me the other day, and I am sure that if you give me the chance I can win it."

"Oh, no, no, I cannot!" Adalia replied, with downcast eyes.

"I am not repulsive to you?"

"Oh, no!" the young woman answered, honestly.

"And perhaps in time you might learn to love me—you know of no reason why you should not?"

"None."

"Why not accept then?"

"No, it is impossible," she answered, firmly, raising her beautiful eyes to his face as she spoke. "You have been kind to me, and I have too few friends not to highly prize those which Heaven has been kind enough to give, but I feel that it would be wrong to accept of a love that can never be realized. It is impossible, and I hope that you will not think unkindly of me for speaking thus honestly and plainly."

It was a painful task, and the voice of the girl faltered as she uttered the words.

"Ah, I see the only man that can win you is the lover who can lay a fortune at your feet!" he banteringly suggested. "You would not refuse them, eh?"

"It would be a terrible temptation," she replied, in a low voice, "but I should never be able to resist it."

"And you would not be able to resist it?"

"I fear that I should not."

"Fear?"

"Yes, for is it not a terrible thing for a woman to sell herself?" she asked; "and it would be a sale just as much as though I was bid off as the slaves used to be at open auction."

"No matter who the man is, so long as he had—let me see, what was the sum? twenty thousand dollars, wasn't it?"

"Oh, why speak of it? It was a foolish speech; such a sum can never be."

"Ah! who knows?" he replied, laughing. "The most unlikely things happen sometimes in this world. Come, let us understand the matter fully; for twenty thousand dollars you would be willing to agree to marry any man, no matter whether he was old or ugly or misshapen in face or form?"

"I fear that I should not be able to resist the temptation," she confessed, her beautiful lips tightly compressed.

"Well, then, behold in me the man, and see, here is the money."

The Bohemian drew a bank-book from one pocket, a check-book from another and laid them on the table side by side.

Adalia looked at him with astonished eyes; she did not comprehend his meaning.

"See, here is an account opened for you with the National Union Bank to the extent of twenty thousand dollars," he said.

Mechanically her eyes followed his finger as he pointed to the book and read the inscription written thereon:

"National Union Bank,
"In account with
"But I do not understand," she said, opening her eyes wide and looking at him.

"The story is soon told," he replied, with a gayety that was plainly affected, although the girl in the innocence of her heart never suspected it. "I told you at the commencement of this interview that fortune had been kind to me. By chance a month ago I came upon a session of a lottery-ticket; bought it in fact of a poor wretch who said he was starving and had nothing else to sell. I gave the man a dollar for it, not that I wanted it, or expected to profit by it, but merely to get rid of the fellow. That ticket drew forty thousand dollars, and the first use I make of the money is to buy the woman I love!"

(To be continued—commenced in No. 420.)

The Cadet's Love;

OR,

From West Point to the Big Horn.

BY CAPTAIN SATTERTHLEE PLUMMER.

THE gay season, which only lasts a scant two months, was at its height at West Point, during the summer of 1877.

The hotels were filled to overflowing, and for years the Point had not seen a season like this. The corps of cadets were in "high feather"; they rode better, marched better, and, alas! fared better than ever before, so the girls said, at least those to whom the Point was a favorite resort.

Young ladies who were adepts in the art of gaining the affections of the opposite sex for their pleasure, and throwing it away for their convenience, already in those little treasure-books marked their dead and wounded; they had enough bell-buttons given to them to trim two or three riding habits; all of said buttons having been taken off just above the hearts of the givers, at the risk of being reported "One button coat" and "Same at same." But the powers that be have to relax the rule in this respect, during the summer encampment, or those of the corps who make their *debut* might find West Point too cold after the January examination to stay there.

There was a boy going on at Cozzens's, and any one standing on the porch and looking in at one of the windows, at the bright scene, would have gazed at a vision of fairy-land.

Nearly every city in the country was represented by some of its fairest daughters, and had you been asked to make a selection, it would have bewildered you to choose.

But we will leave off this general survey, and listen to what that young lady is saying to her partner:

"Believe I do feel a little tired." "Will you go out on the porch with me? It is cool out there."

"Please excuse me. I would like to, but I

promised Katie Ashton something. There, see! she is beckoning to me now."

"Certainly; but later you will let me claim another dance, won't you?"

"Yes, certainly I will."

By this time they had reached Miss Ashton, who said:

"You know, Josie, what you promised me?"

"I've not forgotten, and here I am; so come, let's go; please excuse me."

With that to her late partner, the two locked arms, and bowing right and left, and excusing many profusions of escortship, reached the porch, when Josie Dinsmore broke out with:

"I tell you, Katie, it's all a bore, this hop; I wonder if our boys will come?"

"Certainly they will! Mine will, I know. Isn't he nice?"

"Yes! no nicer than George; and besides, George stands so high in his class."

"What difference does that make, Josie? I heard a cadet say yesterday that there never was a truer saying than that General Butler made in Congress—"

"Yes! I know what you are going to say—about left in front—the head men in a class only fit for Sunday-school teachers, and superintendents of female seminaries. How I wish we had had two or three at our school! It wouldn't have been fun; oh, no!"

"Come on, Josie; let's go to the arbor, now! What a lark this is! If my mother or yours could only know that their best beloveds were meeting young men in this way, ah! me!"

"They would be horrified, of course; but there must be something in the air of West Point, for I don't know of any other place where a coolness that surprises me."

"I'll tell you what the truth of the matter is," said Kate. "That when under the most favorable circumstances it takes a man a week to learn he can say something sweet to you, here a cadet sweeps five minutes after he has been introduced, and if you are agreeable it has come to the kissing part in fifteen—Hush! oh! my!"

"I see them."

The two young ladies had been talking they had left the porch, and gone around the wall to the north side, and after a short walk down a side path toward the Hudson, they reached the arbor where they had agreed to meet two of their cadet friends, that evening.

The cadets, to keep their part of the engagement, had to cross a sentinel's post, dressed in the citizen's suit, obtained from one of the new cadets, and by taking the dock, or rather the river road, would reach the arbor without going near the hotel, for to be caught was a court-martial for "off limits," and an irrevocable sentence of dismissal; but he would have been fairly hearted who would not have chanced even more than that for either of the girls, who stood at the entrance of the arbor.

Josie Dinsmore was eighteen, of medium height, with brown hair and eyes, and a dangerous brown eyes that have a soul looking out of them; a perfect mouth with pearly teeth, and with a natural little quiver about it (which some women try to acquire by practice) which shows a sensitive, gentle disposition; a figure such that a comparison to a mythological goddess would be favorable to hers; highly educated and a lady by birth, and you have as near a description as could be given of a Washington girl who was the belle wherever she went, that summer.

Katie Ashton was a little blonde, one of those two, her whole manner, her face, her eyes, her womanly, withal, pretty and too attractive, for the good already of many a man who had met her—the little sore spots in many cases remaining still unhealed.

We must turn now to the two dark forms in the arbor for a moment, and then the four shall shake hands, and all the *dramatis personae* of our story are on the stage.

Cadet Captain George Hunton, and Cadet Harry Mills, both looking younger than they were, for the young are young, and in the second year, the latter a year older; both first class-men and real nice fellows, bosom-friends and room-mates, good-looking, but nothing marked in appearance, for nearly all cadets look alike, particularly at a distance.

George Hunton was the first to greet the young ladies.

"How kind of you to come! Is it a nice hop? The music sounds as if it might be."

"Yes and no," Katie said; "it was not nice enough to cause us to forget our engagement, not near as good as the music at the Point."

"Many thanks for the compliment. Now you are here, let us all take a walk along the river."

"I will, if Josie will go; what do you say, Josie?"

"Yes, I will go, but remember, Katie, we must not stay out more than half an hour."

The cadets and the young ladies started, Katie going with Harry Mills; Josie with George Hunton, between whom there already existed that sweet secret of a concealed engagement.

These two hung back, and after the others had got out of hearing Josie said:

"Oh! George, if you should get into any trouble about coming! You know how important it is for you to graduate, and I should never forgive myself if anything happened."

"Never mind, my darling; you must not worry; do not think of anything unpleasant for the half an hour I'm with you."

"I'll try not, but I've got something unpleasant to tell you. I had a letter from home this afternoon, and mother says as Mr. and Mrs. Harris are coming to Washington, I must return with them, and as soon as I get home we are all going to 'Rye Beach' for the balance of the season; you must tell how sorry I am. I counted so on another week, at least."

"I am so going, my pleasure for this summer is over, and all I will have to look forward to are your letters, Josie—you'll write real long ones, won't you? Write me, darling one, as if you were already my dear little wife; you will be near, near, near, won't you?"

"I've told you, George."

"I know you have, but whisper it again, sweetheart, please do!"

"There, then, you dear old tease, stoop down, you are so tall: I love you, George!"

"No one but me, as do you, my precious one; I have dreamed that there was somewhere within me, the capability of a feeling such as I have now, but my wildest dreaming never could have told me how sweet it was to love—love you, my only one."

"Please don't say that," said Katie. "There comes Katie and Mr. Mills. Well, if you must—one more—and the last—"

"You two are the slowest of the slow. Just think, we have been nearly to the dock," Katie said, as she came up to where the lovers were.

George answered her:

"I was trying to persuade Miss Dinsmore that the philosophy of life according to the Darwinian theory was false, and we got so interested, and—"

"Stop! I don't believe a word of it; you are all humbug; you have been doing just as Mr. Mills has, I have no doubt—talking nonsense; but come, Josie, we must go in."

"We'll see you at the music to-morrow morning; you'll come, won't you?"

"I'll come, my dear," said Katie said; "I will if I don't tire myself out dancing to-night."

"Then I'm certain of seeing you, for I never heard of a West End Washington girl doing that."

George then turned to Miss Dinsmore.

"You will consent?"

"Yes, I will, if only to say good-by to my friends. I expect Katie has told you, Mr. Mills, that I start for home to-morrow evening."

"No, she did not. I'm real sorry; I was so in hopes you would be at our hop to-morrow evening; we have persuaded the colonel to extend the time an hour."

"I'm sorry, too, but parental commands, you know, have to be obeyed. Come, Katie. Good-night and pleasant dreams to you both."

Mills answered with a laugh, as they moved off:

"We go to dream of you both."

The two young ladies started at a quick pace toward the hotel; the one it had been a lark, to the other—well, it was sweet.

They were soon in the hall-room again, and giving evasive answers to questionings in regard to their absence, which some of their gentlemen friends had remarked.

Josie Dinsmore did not dance very often, and just as they commenced the "German," under the stereotyped plea of a headache, she retired to her room; and when she said her prayers that night, there was a little petition, wafted through sweet lips, to the powers above to protect and bless him into whose keeping she felt she had given the love of her life.

Oh two cadet friends had reached the riding-hall on their way back from the hotel before either broke the silence. Then it was Harry who said:

"George, what's the matter with you?"

"The truth of the matter is, old fellow, I'm in love."

"What, with a Washington girl?"

"Why not? I know how loyal you are, and that you can keep it to your self, so the real truth is I'm engaged to Miss Dinsmore, and I want you to understand it's no sham affair either, for I shall marry her as soon as I graduate. I do not understand your allusion to Washington girls."

All right, George; never been there myself, don't live in that sort of thing. All I meant was that the girls who come here for the summer will all flirt, and the Washington girls are the most highly educated in the art, and generally have about as much idea of marrying or giving in marriage, as the superintendent has of giving out leave to-morrow."

"I don't think I'd do that, Harry!"

"No, of course not, Miss Dinsmore is lovely, and I congratulate you with all my heart."

"I knew you would, and that I could trust you."

"Of course, I won't say anything about it. Is she well off?"

"What a question! I don't know or care."

"That's so; you will be in the Staff, but I will be in the Line, and if ever I take unto myself an inheritance, it will have to be backed by a check-book."

"I don't believe you, Harry; but here we are. You go to the right of the sentry-box—now for it!"

The sentry's post was successfully crossed and the two were soon locked in cadet dream-land (for there is such a place).

After guard-mounting the next morning our two cadets could be seen wending their way down the road past Trophy Point, with their young lady friends of the evening before.

George did not have much time, during that very brief, to him, morning hour, to say what he wanted to his sweetheart, for she was a belle, and cadets who claimed Washington City as a home considered that they had a right to monopolize some of her time.

As soon as it got noised about that she was going home she was obliged to hold an open-air reception, for every one wanted to say good-by, for Josie Dinsmore was one of those girls that could not help being pleasant to every one, even if she tried to be the contrary. Poor George! He had to stand and hear it, revealed occasionally by a loving look, which showed she felt for him.

We must pass over the parting between these two, for there are some things that even rose writers could not touch upon—sacred episodes that it is sacrilege to lift the curtain and show. Sufficient it is that a sweet, tear-moistened face was turned from camp for concealment, as the carriage drove off on the road to Cozzens's.

Many letters passed between these two, who, contrary to all known laws governing West Point love-affairs, remained faithful to each other. She with the temptations, which one in the whirl of a gay winter in Washington is surrounded, he perforce through the perfect love he had for her. Her letters were a wealth of love on paper. One will be sufficient to show the character of them all:

WASHINGTON, D. C., }
January—, 1877. }

"It was the dearest, sweetest letter you ever wrote me, the one I received yesterday. Always write me such letters, darling; not that all your letters are not just as loving, but this one seemed to touch my heart more deeply than any other ever before. How stupid that I should have sent you the verse of poetry I cut out of the 'Sunday Herald' last week and spoke of. I send it to you now, as a memento, and I desire more than anything in the world to see you, and hope you will come right on here, as soon as you graduate, for I fear I shall not be able to see my boy come out ahead, as I know and feel that he will. Yes, darling, I think there can be no more perfect happiness for me than that of seeing you speak of, when there will be nothing to separate us, and I will cease to love me, and I never allow myself to think of anything so dreadful. I cannot keep you out of my thoughts; and if it were not for these precious letters which I read over so often, and so carefully, I do not know what I should do. I treasure every word, and every letter, and I would not part with any of them. I should like them to be longer. The snow is falling fast this morning, which causes all idea of church to vanish; is somebody thinking of me to-day? I wonder what are the thoughts as tender and loving as somebody's 'little girl' is dreaming over for him?"

"Yours ever,
Josie."

To this was pinned the following:

"I think not of the time that is flying,
How short is the hour I have won;
How near is this living to dying,
How the shadows still follow the sun;
There is naught upon earth—no desire
Worth a thought, though I were had by a sign!
I love thee! I love thee! bring me thy sister
Thy spirit, thy kisses to mine!"

It was the 6th of June, 1877; already the first call had sounded for parade, and scores of cadets were out in front of the barracks ready to "fall in."

To say the graduating class were not happy, would be to slander them. Was not this their last parade, and were they not all to march to the front this evening to the music of "The Dying White Sergeant," doff their hats to the commandant of cadets, and then they were free to go?

"Doff the Cadet, and don the Brevet, and change the gray for the blue."

Did they not have mothers, fathers, sisters and sweethearts out there in front, who would be looking with all their eyes for their boys?

Oh! happy moment to them, and well earned; one step, and some among them were soon to life cold on far Montana's plains, and gentle women's hearts were to be torn by a grief that men cannot comprehend, much less feel—let us stand back, first bury the dead, then let active justice dress the wounds of the living.

George Hunton, true to his promise, made in letter after letter, as soon the next day as he had received his diploma, and had a settlement with the treasurer, started at once for Washington City, not even staying in New York an hour to engage in the harmless yearly frolic of each graduating class.

When he reached Washington it did not take him long before he was ringing the bell at Mr. Dinsmore's home, and then quickly followed by Josie.

"Oh, George!"

"Josie, my darling!"

"How well you are looking. I never saw you in anything except cadet uniform, you know, except that evening."

"You just wait, Josie," George said, as he rubbed his upper lip in a very significant way.

"No, George, I don't want you to have a mustache; I want you just as you are."

"I can't help it from growing; but, by the way, dear, what did your father say to

THE LOST MARINER.

BY FRANK DAVES.

No ship in sight nor any shore,
And nothing but the sea and sky,
To gaze upon. Ah! woe is me!
A shipwrecked sailor on the sea,
Whose fate it is, methinks, to die,
Nor sail the ocean any more.

I gaze and gaze until my eyes
Seem bursting from my throbbing head;
Yet naught I see to cheer me up:
Alas! it is a bitter cup!
I almost wish that I were dead,
And soaring in the distant skies.

Methinks I see the angels now,
With crowns and harps, and singing low
About the gates of paradise.
Ah! weak and wretched, bloodshot eyes!
Why is it ye deceive me so?
What visions in this throbbing brow!

I love the land, I love the hills,
That toss about in their mad dance;
I love the spring where oft I've drunk,
I love the little mossy bank,
Whereon I sat when eve had come,
And crickets chirruped by the rills.

I love the earth, I love my kind;
I love my Alice and my little girl!
Within the shrouded Vales of Bliss
Is happiness; but why is this?
I do not long for that at all.
Ah, sinful soul! so dumb and blind!

I hope to rest up here at last:
This is a weary, weary world!
But oh, to live a little while—
To live and walk the little mile
From Portsmouth to the cottage west,
Just where the ruined mill is past!

I know it may be very wrong,
But there is a glory in these lives;
The future is a mystery.
The sky looks so much like the sea,
And God says love that which He gives,
And have your day, and sing your song.

Methinks beyond the Hills of God
My soul would loom across the waste,
And that again I'd long to be
A lover by the moonlit sea;
And if I could, I'd fly in haste,
And stand again upon the sod.

I'd love the newest angel most;
And if the tenderest flowers of spring,
The lily and the blue harebell;
Were on his brow, I'd murmur, "Well!"
And songs of earth I'd sweetly sing,
Among the white-winged angel host.

But God's way is not our way;
And I must leave all that I love,
And fly away to other worlds,
The wind is up, the water curls,
And there is naught above,
But never ending blue and gray.

Typical Women.

ELIZABETH.
"THE GOOD QUEEN BESS."

BY DR. LOUIS LEGRAND.

If Semiramis, Cleopatra and Zenobia were types of ancient and Oriental civilization, it may be said with equal truth that Elizabeth of England was a representative of modern and Western civilization. She came forward at a critical moment in the history of Europe, when the medieval governments were rapidly reforming and the new ideas of literature, art, religion and political economy were presaging vast changes. In her these ideas were fully embodied, and her long reign now obtains the glory of having so directed the mind and animated the enterprise of the new era as to virtually become the parent of modern progress.

Henry VIII., the father of Elizabeth, was a character at once repulsive and commanding. He was king of a great realm which embraced England and a considerable portion of France. His ambition was boundless; but, led almost wholly by his passions, he became a moral brute, who spent a long life in developing schemes, laws and institutions, every one of which was tainted with his selfishness, molded by his avarice, or expressive of his shrewd will. He was at once the father of a new Britain and a new church, yet had in him not one atom of good principle or honesty. He was, at the best, a detestable man, a detestable husband and a detestable ruler; and yet, strange contradiction! he left on his age and people the impress of an intelligence and energy that make his name renowned in history.

Henry first married Catharine of Aragon—a Spanish princess of eminent virtues and piety. It was a marriage of state, purely—made when Henry was but twelve years of age; and Catharine, six years older, was even then the widow of Henry's eldest brother, Arthur. For such an unusual and forbidden alliance a special dispensation from the Pope had to be obtained; but it was never congenial, and when the beautiful Anne Boleyn came into the queen's household as maid of honor, Henry's fierce love soon led to the repudiation of Catharine and the espousal of the new queen. A stupendous process of perjury, bribery and dictation, Catharine was dethroned and Anne Boleyn became queen—an act which brought about an alienation from the hierarchy of Rome and the formation of a new church, of which the King of England was the recognized head.

Of Anne he tired in about six years, and for "crimes and misdemeanors," trumped up for the purpose, she was condemned and beheaded, in May, 1536—opening the way for Henry's marriage with the lovely Jane Seymour; who, dying within a year, left the great monarch free for a fourth wife. Her he found in Anne of Cleves—a Dutch woman—whom he had never seen but wed for motives of interest. She came; he saw; and was greatly disappointed, yet he married her; but in revenge he beheaded the prime minister who had negotiated the match, and then had the alliance with the Dutch woman annulled by a mutual agreement, she taking £3,000 per year on which to live in retirement in England, as the repudiated Catharine lived.

Henry had, of course, found a new flame—this time in Catharine Howard, niece of the great Duke of Norfolk; but, only a few weeks she was queen, for, having proofs of her infidelities before marriage, his "honor" demanded her sacrifice and she was beheaded. A year later he espoused a widow, Catharine Parr. This wife he tried to impeach, but she was too shrewd for him, and the old monster died (1547) ere he could add another wife to his scandalous record.

By Catharine of Spain he had several children, but only the Princess Mary lived to womanhood, to become Queen of England and known as "Bloody Mary." By Anne Boleyn he had one daughter, Elizabeth—the "Good Queen Bess" of the courtier historians. By Jane Seymour he had one son, who reigned as Edward VI., but he died at the age of nine, leaving his father's death as Edward VI. By his other wives he had no issue. So the succession followed through Edward (1547) to Mary (1553), the unfortunate Lady Jane Grey reigning but ten days, after Edward's death, and from Mary to Elizabeth, who ascended the throne in January, 1558—she then being twenty-six years of age.

Elizabeth's childhood and girlhood were passed in comparative seclusion, but under good masters, through whose instruction she advanced rapidly in the learning of the times. Says the historian Camden:

"She was in great grace and favor with King Edward, her brother, as likewise in singular esteem with the nobility and the people, for she was of admirable beauty and well deserving a crown, of a modest gravity, excellent wit, royal sorrow, happy memory, and indefatigably given to the study of learning; inasmuch as before she was seventeen

years of age she understood well the Latin, French and Italian tongues, and had an indifferent knowledge of the Greek. Neither did she neglect music, so far as it became a princess, being able to sing sweetly and play handsomely on the lute."

That one so well qualified, and with the not remote promise of succession to the throne, should be sought in marriage is not strange. Many were the plans and intrigues of state to see her well wed—the Protestant or new church faction wishing her to marry at home; the old church faction, who looked to Mary for their hope of restoration to power, earnestly desired Elizabeth wed to some foreigner who would take her off out of the country. But, she had a will and a way of her own, and never found one of the proposed alliances to her taste. She remained single, as also did her Roman Catholic half-sister Mary, until after her accession to the throne, when she wed her cousin, Philip of Spain.

These two women by the force of circumstance became antagonists. Representing the two factions, which were about evenly balanced in wealth and strength, there was danger for Mary in Elizabeth's candidacy; and when Mary came to power, in 1553, the new queen was not long in finding a pretext for sending the child of Anne Boleyn to the Tower (March 11th, 1554), from whence Elizabeth expected to come forth only to walk to the headsman's block, where her mother had perished. But, stained as was Mary's soul with the blood of many victims, sent to the block, stake and dungeon, she shrunk from ordering an innocent sister's death; and the girl went forth again, in May, to reside in the home of an appointed jailer, whence she was removed, still under surveillance, to the royal palace at Hatfield. There she remained until Mary's death (Nov. 17th, 1558), comporting herself, we are told, with such modesty and submission to the Catholic guardians placed over her, that, when Mary's death was announced, there was no hesitancy of the party in power to admit her succession. She went up to London Nov. 23d to be received with great demonstrations of joy by people of all ranks and classes. On the 28th she made a grand public progress through the city; and though not formally crowned until January 15th, 1559, commenced at once to exercise her prerogatives as queen.

She quickly betrayed her fitness to command by assuming a mastery over her able council. Little by little the Church of England party was given the supremacy. Parliament, obedient to her request, formally restored to the crown the jurisdiction over ecclesiastical and spiritual estate established by Henry but nullified by Mary. It formally restored the use of King Edward's "Book of Common Prayer," and public worship was generally performed, in English, throughout all England on Whitsunday (May 8th, 1559).

Immense excitement of course ensued; but, sustained by men, chosen with marvelous sagacity by the queen, she pressed on until she virtually became a recognized head of the schismatics or Protestants in all Europe. Before she had shown her purposes fully she was seeking marriage by Philip of Spain, the husband of Mary; but this alliance, for various reasons, she treated with an indifference which aroused that most powerful monarch's hostility, and for years thereafter the world watched with deep interest the attitude of these two monarchs. Elizabeth, haughty and bigoted champions of opposing systems. While it nominally was a struggle of monarchs and opposing systems, after all it was the old antagonism of Saxon against Latin—English and Norman against Roman. Elizabeth found at her call a race of men whose ability and daring excited her to a more than queenly enthusiasm over their brilliant exploits by sea: Drake, Hawkins, Raleigh, Howard and Cavendish covered the name of Britain with glory; and with commendable pride she bestowed honors on her real heroes as well as upon the favorites with whom her name has been associated in no creditable manner.

Though arbitrary, dictatorial, self-willed and selfish; though she farmed out monopolies in a most gross and oppressive manner, and though she retained in high office and authority numerous men of bad character; though she was vain, mean, resentful and treacherous, yet did she ever and at all times bear in mind the greatness of her kingdom, and strive, sedulously, to make the English people, as a people, prosperous and happy.

Her wonderful success of course was largely due to her own strength of character and the devotion which it inspired in her subjects; but it must not be forgotten that the age itself was ripe for change, progress and development. The New World was just opening its shadowy realm to occupation, and pouring a steady stream of riches into European coffers. The rivalry of nations in adventure, discovery and traffic called into sudden life the best energies of men and governments. The upheaving of the Reformation turned toward England thousands of admirable workers in the arts and manufactures, whose skill made England in one generation become a center of aptest artistry and invention.

And, in consonance with this sudden outburst of enterprise, and astonishing assertion of individual energy, there came a greater marvel in the appearance of a race of thinkers and writers whose fame will live forever—Lord Bacon, Shakespeare, Jonson, Bunton, Fletcher, Spenser, Hooker; and who, by their writings, laid deep the substructure upon which English literature, philosophy and theology have built so grandly.

All these elements were not of Elizabeth's creation, nor even of her molding. They came out of the era, the times, and the situation. They would have been active under any queen or king; but Elizabeth was wise enough to detect their quality and value, to vitalize them by appreciation and to lead them all into the one channel of her own policy. England flourished and strengthened until, at her death, in 1603, after a reign of forty-four years, the English language, literature and thought obtained an ascendancy which greatly amazed the older nationalities and more polished people.

To trace in detail the events of such a reign were quite impossible in a necessarily limited sketch. The woman as woman, and Elizabeth as queen alone, is a theme for a volume. She was a typical woman—with characteristics so strongly defined that there is really no difficulty in reading the story and moral of her life. She was very gross; so was her era. She was very vain; so were lords and ladies at all the courts. She was red-headed, freckled, ugly-limbed, rough-featured and ungainly, which was strange considering that her mother really was a beautiful woman, and her father, in mid-life, was a fine-looking man. She was avaricious and mercenary to a contemptible degree; but corruption was so much the rule that even the great and wise Lord Bacon accepted bribes on the bench. She was of rudest and most indelicate speech, but such was the speech of court, camp and country—as the dramas of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, who painted to the life, only too painfully testify. She was on such terms of intimacy with known profligates and rascals as left an indelible stain on her maiden fame; but if she had been wholly pure it would have been an exception most rare in the court circles of all that era. She was so little and mean and envious that life in her family was one round of petty tyranny and unhappiness. She was a bigot, as all egoists are; she was a tyrant, as all profoundly selfish natures must be. She hated with a fierce fervor and loved with a love singularly qualified by suspicion and aversion; she distrusted even her most favored advisers, and literally lived without an honest faith in religion, in men and in the future.

But, glaring as were all these defects of heart, character and tongue, Elizabeth was the shrewdest of diplomats, the most sagacious of sovereigns, the best of directors and most tenacious of generals. She obtained and held steadily to the end, the love and confidence of her subjects. She ruled so benignly that modern England loves to date from the Elizabethan Era.

AN EDEN GLIMPSE.

ACROSTIC SONNET.

BY JAMES HUNGERFORD.

For but a second, when I saw thee there,
A fleeting second merely, did I seem
Newly awakened from many a year of dream;
No knight for that time of thy love's quest,
I saw a morn of beauty on me burst—
Eyes feeling-brightened, their celestial beam
Dazzled and enshaded, by whose loving gleam
Ever since then my curbs have been dispersed.
Vision most charming of life Eden-prime!
And thou, sweet lady, whose exquisite face,
Let as for light, and even of matronage,
Lately brought back to me my morning time,
Ever may happiness thy life-course trace
Each footstep drawing near an endless home
sublime!

Maud's Easter Lilies.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

The late westerling sunlight was falling in a gorgeous glow of orange and royal purple, crimson and blue through the stained glass windows of the grand old church, lighting with a gladness the somber, massive walnut pews with the rich real brown cushions, and brightening into positive beauty of glory the gilded pipes of the organ that upon its pillars of majesty, and the laborers in their task of love and beauty had ceased from it, and were resting a moment before they left the church alone to its Easter adornments.

"It looks very well, Miss Esmond, does it not?" It was Mr. Secretan who spoke—the rector of St. George's, and he looked at Maud Esmond's sweet face as he had found himself looking strangely often of late—a look that, while it made the girl's heart thrill with sweet, vague happiness, filled his own with the deepest sense of rest and content he ever had known.

She was a girl whom one could hardly look at and fail to admire. Not for her beauty—Mabel Trenchard standing beside her, radiant and sparkling in her clear brunette beauty, dressed about the neck in a white lace collar, and with a flash of blue—Mabel Trenchard, the dashing soprano soloist in the St. George choir, whom people came from near and far to hear—Mabel Trenchard, who lived in the handsome house on the hill—was incomparably more noticeable than Maud Esmond, who, quiet, unobtrusive, her unassuming mode of attire, her sweet low voice that enough people thought far more worth listening to than Miss Trenchard's.

And yet, every one admired Maud—her lovely gray eyes, that mirrored every emotion, her sunny smile, her purposefully she was seeking marriage by Philip of Spain, the husband of Mary; but this alliance, for various reasons, she treated with an indifference which aroused that most powerful monarch's hostility, and for years thereafter the world watched with deep interest the attitude of these two monarchs. Elizabeth, haughty and bigoted champions of opposing systems. While it nominally was a struggle of monarchs and opposing systems, after all it was the old antagonism of Saxon against Latin—English and Norman against Roman. Elizabeth found at her call a race of men whose ability and daring excited her to a more than queenly enthusiasm over their brilliant exploits by sea: Drake, Hawkins, Raleigh, Howard and Cavendish covered the name of Britain with glory; and with commendable pride she bestowed honors on her real heroes as well as upon the favorites with whom her name has been associated in no creditable manner.

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Her wonderful success of course was largely due to her own strength of character and the devotion which it inspired in her subjects; but it must not be forgotten that the age itself was ripe for change, progress and development. The New World was just opening its shadowy realm to occupation, and pouring a steady stream of riches into European coffers. The rivalry of nations in adventure, discovery and traffic called into sudden life the best energies of men and governments. The upheaving of the Reformation turned toward England thousands of admirable workers in the arts and manufactures, whose skill made England in one generation become a center of aptest artistry and invention.

And, in consonance with this sudden outburst of enterprise, and astonishing assertion of individual energy, there came a greater marvel in the appearance of a race of thinkers and writers whose fame will live forever—Lord Bacon, Shakespeare, Jonson, Bunton, Fletcher, Spenser, Hooker; and who, by their writings, laid deep the substructure upon which English literature, philosophy and theology have built so grandly.

All these elements were not of Elizabeth's creation, nor even of her molding. They came out of the era, the times, and the situation. They would have been active under any queen or king; but Elizabeth was wise enough to detect their quality and value, to vitalize them by appreciation and to lead them all into the one channel of her own policy. England flourished and strengthened until, at her death, in 1603, after a reign of forty-four years, the English language, literature and thought obtained an ascendancy which greatly amazed the older nationalities and more polished people.

To trace in detail the events of such a reign were quite impossible in a necessarily limited sketch. The woman as woman, and Elizabeth as queen alone, is a theme for a volume. She was a typical woman—with characteristics so strongly defined that there is really no difficulty in reading the story and moral of her life. She was very gross; so was her era. She was very vain; so were lords and ladies at all the courts. She was red-headed, freckled, ugly-limbed, rough-featured and ungainly, which was strange considering that her mother really was a beautiful woman, and her father, in mid-life, was a fine-looking man. She was avaricious and mercenary to a contemptible degree; but corruption was so much the rule that even the great and wise Lord Bacon accepted bribes on the bench. She was of rudest and most indelicate speech, but such was the speech of court, camp and country—as the dramas of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, who painted to the life, only too painfully testify. She was on such terms of intimacy with known profligates and rascals as left an indelible stain on her maiden fame; but if she had been wholly pure it would have been an exception most rare in the court circles of all that era. She was so little and mean and envious that life in her family was one round of petty tyranny and unhappiness. She was a bigot, as all egoists are; she was a tyrant, as all profoundly selfish natures must be. She hated with a fierce fervor and loved with a love singularly qualified by suspicion and aversion; she distrusted even her most favored advisers, and literally lived without an honest faith in religion, in men and in the future.

But, glaring as were all these defects of heart, character and tongue, Elizabeth was the shrewdest of diplomats, the most sagacious of sovereigns, the best of directors and most tenacious of generals. She obtained and held steadily to the end, the love and confidence of her subjects. She ruled so benignly that modern England loves to date from the Elizabethan Era.

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diant in the purple-gray dusk that was gathering like a delicate veil of mist. And Maud, looking from Mabel's impassioned eyes that scarcely concealed their secret, to Mr. Secretan's bright countenance—bright from a reflex of his own sweet thoughts concerning herself, far more than from the very human admiration Mabel Trenchard elicited, Maud thought, with a swift pang of pain that, after all the fond girlish dreams she had permitted herself to enjoy, after all the kindness Mr. Secretan had shown her, after all the vague happiness she had, somehow, experienced in connection with him, it had been nothing but dreams, and only kindness, and certainly very vague vagueness. Of course he cared for beautiful Mabel Trenchard, with her elegance of manner, her beauty of person, her artistic voice, her prospects of substantial worth.

And then Maud turned away down the center aisle, with a dull pain at her soul that was not lessened by the rector's voice, pleasant, gentlemanly, and to her ear, so indifferent.

"I think Miss Esmond is that," as Miss Trenchard has kindly donated her lily, you had better adhere to your intention, and give yours to your friend. My word for it, they will be appreciated as a precious Easter token."

There was a quiver in her voice as she answered him—a quiver so resolutely overcome by womanly pride and resentment that he heard only the coldness.

"I am not sure I shall take your advice, Mr. Secretan. Why, it is nearly dark!"

And as they stepped outside, Mr. Secretan thought he must have been mistaken after all about the disposal of her lilies.

"I suggested a moment to talk with Mabel about the service of song for the morning, and Maud sauntered leisurely along until Mabel should overtake her, which she did, with hurried step, a moment later, and flushing cheeks.

"We shall be obliged to hurry—at least I shall," said Mr. Secretan, as he turned to be back with my one poor little lily, seven exactly. He said he wished particularly to see me—oh, Maud, if—"

Her pause told her hopes, her expectations as eloquently as words could have done. Maud's heart beat unsteadily a moment, then she answered her.

"Mr. Secretan could mean but one thing if he said he especially wished to see you. You will be the happiest woman the Easter morn will shine on, Mabel."

And after the two had parted at the corner where the ways diverged, Mabel went home with excitement flashing in her eyes, and a look that was not rest or peace—or the promise of joy on her handsome face.

"If she chose to misconstrue me, is it my fault? Is not to-night a good time for me to give her to understand what I intend shall be a fact before long? Mr. Secretan does wish specially to see me—and the tenor, to suggest a slight change in the opening anthem. If Maud thought of anything else, can I help it?"

And Maud walked quickly home, and sent her tearless eyes over her lilies whose blooming had been such a precious toil of pleasure for his sake.

"My poor blossoms! He will not care for you or me, but your beauty, that was to please him alone, shall not be lost. You shall come with me."

She talked to them as some finely-strung women have a way of talking to their flowers, as though their grace and beauty and fragrance were tokens of sentient knowledge and appreciation.

Then, a while later—long after the appointed hour when Mabel had been to the dimly-lighted, solemn old church with her one lily, and placed it where it was needed; when Mr. Secretan and Mr. Thorne had never had stood by and criticised lightly, and the three had adjourned to the organ in the rectory adjoining, and after an hour of practice, Mr. Thorne had escorted Mabel home—Mabel, thoroughly disgusted and

after all this had happened, while Maud had been fighting down the anguish and distress in her poor tempest-tossed heart, then she carefully severed her cherished Easter lilies, and wrapped them in oil silk and tissue paper, and had slipped quietly out and down the street to the dear old church, where, on the morrow, she would sing her sad minor strains in the opening anthem—strains as typical of her own heart as would Mabel's be, in the closing solo—grand, joyous, triumphant, victorious.

"I do not want to stir, and several lights were burning dimly. She stole up the deserted aisle, the tears springing to her sweet gray eyes as she remembered the dreams and the awakening from the dreams she had known beneath that arched roof.

She touched her lilies—so slowly pure, so exquisitely perfect; she touched them with quivering lips, and then—as the pity of it all overcame her, the disappointment of it all surged in hot thrills of pain over her, she threw them down on the steps, and covered her face with her hands, barely able to stand from sheer agitation and the passion of tears that came gushing through her fingers.

Until Ellis Secretan came suddenly upon her, and touched her hands with his own, and spoke to her.

"Maud! What troubles you? You can tell me and let me help you bear it?"

His sweet, sympathetic voice stabbed her deeper yet—that dear voice that had whispered love-words to Mabel Trenchard!

She drew away from him.

"I have no trouble that you can remove, Mr. Secretan. I came to bring my lilies."

He stooped and picked them up.

"The happy flowers you were intending for that dear friend of yours? Do you know, Maud, forgive me if I offend—do you know I was so foolish as to hope those lilies were for me?"

There was no mistaking his tone, his manner. Even old Mr. Hart, the sexton, standing an aisle away, dusting a pew-bank vigorously, would have understood the passion in the tone.

Maud looked up, almost affrighted.

"Mr. Secretan—you thought—I meant—you! Oh, how can you say so? Please, please don't make me any more unhappy than I am by thinking you dare talk so to me, after—after loving Mabel!"

"Poor girl! She was awkward in proportion as he was astonished. He listened, puzzled, a gravity on his fine face that lightened as she spoke. As she finished he actually smiled.

"So you thought I loved Miss Trenchard, did you, little girl? And the knowledge made you unhappy? Why, God for that, Maud, for I know by it that you do care for me—oh, my darling, my love—if you will have it so! Maud, dear, I don't know how you came to believe I cared for Miss Trenchard, but you are mistaken. It is you, little girl, and has been only you ever since I first knew you. I love you, Maud, it was I whom you meant to have the lilies—the darling, because you loved me—because you love me now, and will add new joy to the glory of Easter morning by promising to be my precious wife!"

She stood breathless; a perfect flood of rose and golden light seemed pouring into her soul. Her tears were flowing faster than before, but instead of the bitter drops wrung from an aching heart, they were the crystal overflow of an almost unendurable happiness.

"She listened while he pleaded his cause so well, then, lifted her saint-like eyes, that were irradiated with the glory within.

"It will indeed be Easter for me—the resurrection of deathless hope and happiness from the dark grave of anguish and despair! Mr. Secretan, the lilies were for you—because—I love you!"

And the Easter Sabbath dawned golden-sun and azure-sailed and balmy-zephyred; and of all who rendered the joyful service of sermon or song, there were none with such blessings in their hearts, such rich promise for future bliss as he to whom she gave, and she who nursed to bloom, Maud's Easter Lilies.

ANTICIPATION.

BY ERN E. STILLMAN.

The May-time is coming, is coming
All garlanded fair;
With voices brimming over with laughter
And flooding the air;
With woodlands and valleys sweet-ringing
With bird minstrelsy;
With violets daisies up-springing
And blossoming free
And roses, red-hearted, coming after,
Perfuming the leaves,
While over the meadows, low-humming,
Flock bees of bees.

My darling is coming, is coming
With loving, bright eyes
Like violets dew-gleaming at morning,
Or sunny May skies;
With heart brimming over with sweetness
Of love's melody;
With voice like the brook in its fleetness
Murmuring in its
With cheeks like the flushes of dawning,
Radiantly bright—
My darling is coming, is coming
To gladden my sight.

May-time and my darling are coming!
I hear, oh, I hear
Their voices together out-streaming
In the future near;
She went—and with her all gladness
Departed from me,
And my lone spirit sung in sadness
A wild threnody;
She comes—and all nature is beaming,
Brightening her way
And my heart is throbbing and drumming
Awaiting the May!

Lady Helen's Vow;

OR,

THE MOTHER'S SECRET.

A Romance of Love and Honor.

BY THE LATE MRS. E. F. ELLET.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MEETING AT THE OPERA.

PARLIAMENT had commenced its session in London; though as yet some of the fashionable had not left their homes in the country to endure the discomforts of a March in the metropolis. There was no lack, however, of gaiety in high circles.

Alicia and her father had their lodgings at a private family hotel in Berkeley square, almost exclusively patronized by the nobility.

The girl had fairly entered society, having been presented at court by a noble kinswoman, and chaperoned everywhere by Lady Northampton.

The world of fashion had its charms for her; and many suitors were at her feet. The baron felt sure of effacing the image of Reginald, in the splendid prospects, that at her consent, would open before her.

The Marquis and Marchioness of Estonbury, with the dowager marchioness, were in their magnificent town-house in Piccadilly. The dowager did not as yet allow herself to be seen at balls or routs; but she accompanied her daughter in drives almost every day, and made one of the home circle in the drawing-room.

She continually urged the young wife into gay society; and Helen passively obeyed, little as she seemed to enjoy scenes of the kind. She wore the honors her marriage had won with more dignity than either her mother or her husband had anticipated.

Estonbury had never loved her, and made no pretense of doing so. So long as she did not mortify his pride, so long as she appeared at the head of his table and in public with grace and majesty sufficient to do him credit, he was content. He rarely went out with her. He was courteous to her at all times; and that surely was as much as she could expect, without any manifestation of the affection he could not feel.

Her submission to his slightest wish was the same at all times. Obedience she had promised; and she kept her vow implicitly. So gentle and complying was she in everything that he felt the yoke an easy one, and in turn was pleased to indulge her wishes whenever he learned of them. This he did through the dowager. No occasion of difference had ever yet arisen.

"How I should like to call upon her!" thought the young marchioness.

Then the star of the evening again appeared, and she was absorbed in the music.

As they came out, at the conclusion of the opera, their course was stopped by several acquaintances. Some little delay occurred near the door; and quite unexpectedly and suddenly young Lady Estonbury found herself close enough to the young girl she had observed in the box to have a good view of her face.

Alicia was surrounded by attendant gentlemen, but never did girl seem more unconscious of the admiration she excited. She was leaning on the arm of Sir Victor Wilder, and on the other side of her stood a majestic-looking lady, a peeress well known in the highest circles, who was attended by Lord Swinton.

For one instant the eyes of young Lady Estonbury met those of the fair girl, and each seemed to find in the other some attraction of the kind not expressed in ordinary acquaintance. Alicia's eyes were lighted in a half-smile and Helen bowed slightly, and felt the warm color rush to her face. Neither could imagine the influence one of the two was to exercise over the destinies of the other!

The dowager hurried her daughter forward, and the cry of "Lady Estonbury's carriage" was presently heard.

As the ladies ascended the stairs to their sleeping apartments, the young marchioness saw Mrs. Chisholm coming out of her mother's dressing-room. The dame turned back into the room and remained there. Helen wondered what it could mean. Chisholm was no longer one of the household, and not a frequent visitor.

Helen had not forgotten her resolution, nor the solemn vow she had taken on the eve of her marriage, though she had never since, to her mother, mentioned the name of Reginald.

She resolved to lose no time in learning what news the discharged maid had brought; for she was convinced her errand had something to do with him.

She came into the dowager's dressing-room the next morning, and asked at once the question she longed to ask; frankly avowing, when taxed by Lady Estonbury, that her interest in Reginald prompted her to ask it.

"You ought to be ashamed, Helen," her mother added, "to care for another man than your husband to whom your love belongs."

"Mother, listen to me," said the young marchioness, emphatically. "You are mistaken in supposing I love Reginald Holmes."

He went by that name, and Helen had learned the fact.

"Indeed, I feared it," said her mother. "You comfort me by the assurance that you have forgotten him."

"Nor have I forgotten him, mamma. But I know that to love him as I once did would be a sin; and I have schooled my heart. If I were free at this moment, and you gave consent, I would not marry him."

"I am glad to hear you speak so, Helen."

"But I am still interested in his fortunes—in his future. I am pledged to watch over it as if he were my own brother."

"That is but natural, child, since you were brought up together. You will be glad, then, to hear of his success."

"Tell me of it, mamma."

"Chisholm has been to see him."

"He is in London, then?"

"Yes, studying law; he has a great talent for the law, I understand."

"Well—go on!"

"Mr. Chisholm heard that he was aided by some Scottish friends, and naturally he wished to share in his good prospects."

"By what right?" asked Helen, quickly.

"Helen, you forget that the Chisholms are Reginald's parents."

"I know enough to convince me that they are not his parents," was the prompt answer.

The dowager grew very pale and grasped her daughter's arm.

"Helen, have you ever communicated to Reginald your doubts on this subject?"

"I, mother! I have never seen nor spoken to Reginald since we parted at the Court."

"Nor written—nor sent message to him?"

"Neither."

"Be wary how you do so, girl! But somehow, he has the same notion. When Chisholm claimed from him a sum of money for his and his wife's support, he was coldly refused. When his wife—my maid that was—went to him to crave help on the score of relationship, he frowned not. He refused to believe she was his mother."

"On what ground?"

"His own feelings—his inward conviction."

"He is right!" cried Lady Estonbury, clapping her hands.

"Silly girl! you defend such unnatural conduct!"

"You know why I do not think he is their son. He had not the 'strawberry birth-mark,' you know."

"Helen!" cried her mother, white with rage, "if you ever dare allude to that again, you will offend me past forgiveness!"

"It was Chisholm I heard mention it as belonging to her boy."

"Silence! or I shall tell you no more."

"I will be silent. So he disowned the Chisholms?"

"Entirely; they could only get one promise from him."

"What was that?"

"That the might take and enjoy whatever it might please Lord Estonbury to bestow on him."

"Nay, mother, I know Reginald never so worded it."

"Why, my Lady Incredulous, how do you know that?"

"Because Reginald promptly declined your offer, and my lord's, of an independence. He would not, after that, make any claim."

"Chisholm, the woman I mean, spoke of your husband's willingness to assist him; and he spurned it at as before."

"That is likely."

"Then she asked if he were willing they should receive my lord's bounty, as they needed it?"

"What said he?"

"That he had no claim to anything, nor would he accept anything. If they received aid from my lord it must be independent of all claims on his part, and not founded on any supposed relationship to him."

"He was right."

The dowager flashed a glance of anger on her daughter.

"He sent Chisholm away, bidding her—the unnatural monster!—never come into his presence again. But she will ask my lord for the provision the misguided young man refused."

Helen made no reply.

"Have you any objection to that?"

"I do not know—"

"At least, if Chisholm obtains money from Lord Estonbury, you will not oppose his liberality."

"No—I will not; I do not care what he gives the man or his wife."

"It was scandalous in Reginald to refuse them assistance. He is already making money by his labors, and then he is known to be intimate with the rich merchant—the India man—"

"Who?" asked the young lady.

"His name is Wallrade, I understand, though I never saw him. He is rich, but does not bear a good character."

"And Reginald is intimate with him?"

"I have heard so. His money will cover a multitude of sins, in the eyes of a needy young man."

Helen had risen to leave the room, but turned back at this; her face aflame with anger.

"If you mean, mother, that Reginald will be the friend of a bad man because he is rich," she said, "you say what is not the truth. It is not his nature. Nor would he have cast off the Chisholms, had he not been firmly convinced they had imposed on him a lie and a fraud. You know, mother, as well as I do, that he is not their son."

She left the room without another look at the dowager, who sunk into her chair, faint and trembling; her lips articulating the words: "Can she suspect? Impossible! She knows nothing! If she did, would she drag ruin upon her own head?"

CHAPTER XXV.

A NEW FRIEND.

In the room next to that occupied by Reginald at the Temple, a strange, elderly man passed many a weary day. It was a sort of office in which he kept his papers and occasionally received a visit; sometimes, in bad weather, lodging there.

Reginald had often met him on the stairs, and had several times rendered him out to his friend, as supplying him with matches, inviting him to warm himself by his fire; lending him paper, pen and ink when he happened to have none; offering the morning *Times*, etc. He saw the traces of suffering in the shrunken and slightly-bent form, the deeply-lined features and sallow complexion; these were sufficient to interest him; for his compassion was readily drawn out by the evidence of sorrow or trouble of any kind.

The stranger had once or twice seemed on the verge of confidence, of communication beyond the cold commonplaces of mere recognition; and the young man was ready to make his acquaintance. Then he had suddenly and unaccountably drawn back into silence.

Reginald, who had been interested in his intelligent countenance and his manner, so eager and impulsive that it betrayed his foreign birth, thought this strange, but he made no effort to overcome the reserve.

One day, seeing the man go down-stairs before him, he had pointed him out to his friend, Frank Ralston. On a subsequent visit young Ralston remarked, carelessly:

"I heard something that surprised me concerning your neighbor. The old man is very rich."

"Indeed?"

"You would not think so, from his plain dress, and his having a home here."

"His attire, though not costly, is always neat," returned Reginald. "And he has the air of a man burdened with cares. Your poor man must be a great deal, you know."

"He made his fortune in India, I understand."

"He is not an Englishman?"

"No; a German by birth; a thrifty person, like many of his nation."

"It is strange that he remains in London."

"He may be looking for an heir to his money. I heard something of that sort."

"Looking for an heir?"

"Or rather an heiress."

"Why? How can he expect a daughter, or to marry?"

"Hardly the last, with such a face and figure. But I heard nothing definite. You had best cultivate him," added Frank, laughing.

"Thank you; the business of heritage-hunting has no attractions for me. What you say, however, explains the reasons of his deportment toward me."

"How so?"

"We have interchanged neighborly offices; but when on the point of becoming better acquainted, he has always drawn back."

"Why? How can he expect a daughter, or to marry?"

"If he is rich, he naturally avoids the poor, who might become troublesome. He shrinks from a penniless young man, situated as I am."

"The greater fool if he does! Your friendship, my boy, would do him a service."

"You have a princely soul, Frank, to think so; but others will judge me according to my circumstances. To change the subject, I have an invitation for you. Here."

They had entered the office, and Reginald took a dainty rose-colored card from a pile of papers.

"To Lady Brandon—for Thursday."

"I owe this to you, old fellow!" cried Frank.

"Her ladyship is one of the few whose kindness has followed me in spite of my fall," said Reginald, gratefully. "If I went into any society, I would attend her ball. You shall bear my excuse."

"But you must go."

Reginald shook his head, with a grave smile.

"Let me tell you, however, I saw her ladyship's carriage on Saturday. At the Hotel in Berkeley square. You know who lodged there?"

"I do not know," replied Reginald.

"Baron Swinton and his daughter. I heard her ladyship's footman inquire for them."

A flush overspread the young law student's face.

"I knew they were in London," he said.

"They are lodging at that hotel; and Lady Brandon visits them. They will be—at least the young lady will be—at her house on Thursday."

"The more reason I should not go. I have resolved not to claim the acquaintance of—of the baron till I am in a position to meet him—on a footing of equality."

"You are so now, Reginald. Do genius, industry, and good power of the head—no noble integrity of character, constitute no claim? That reminds me—here is a letter from my father; he has again placed a sum at his banker's to your credit."

Frank drew a paper from his pocket, and handed it to Reginald, who put it back, declining to receive it.

"No, Frank; I have too long trespassed on your father's generosity. My best thanks for this new proof of his kindness; but I am earning money now; quite enough for all my expenses."

"Reginald! you will not mortify my father and me by refusing his help?"

"If I needed it—I would not; but, you see, thanks to the Laird's liberality, I am not only independent, but have excellent prospects. Do not ask me to receive aid when I can stand alone!"

Frank put back the paper with reluctance.

"You have been injuring your health by writing of nights," he said, reproachfully.

"Do you recognize my style in the article?" asked Reginald, touching the *Times* on the table.

"Well—it is only now and then. They don't employ my pen regularly."

"As well not. Your health would not stand the strain. Promise me you will not do it again."

"It was not for money. I did not need that. But I wanted to air my opinions. Don't be uneasy, Frank. When I need funds again I will apply to you."

After a little more friendly talk the friends separated.

Not half an hour afterward, Reginald heard a tap at his door. He went and opened it. The shriveled elderly man who had been the subject of their conversation stood there.

"Have you a few moments' leisure, Mr. Holmes?" he asked.

Reginald courteously bowed, and asked him to walk in. He placed a chair for him, wondering what had caused this first visit.

The visitor took the seat, laid his hat on the table, and rubbed his hands, while looking at the young lawyer.

"You are surprised to see me," he remarked, speaking slowly; "but you will be more so when you know my errand."

Reginald looked up inquiringly.

"I have often thought, young gentleman, that your acquaintance would be a most desirable one for me, lonely as I am, and well able as you are to lend a charm to companionship and to give counsel in doubtful matters."

Again the young man bowed. There was something of fascination to him in the deference of this intelligent stranger, and he murmured an acknowledgment of the pleasure it promised him.

"I have heard your history lately," the elderly man continued; "and the story of your reverses has greatly interested me. You are a no common character. Any honorable man might feel proud of your acquaintance."

"You are kind to say so," replied the student, feeling embarrassed, though flattered.

"I must now state my errand. I come, not to ask the honor of knowing you and being

numbered among your friends, but to warn you, on no account, to receive me as an acquaintance."

Reginald looked at him with astonishment.

"You have shown me kindness. Beware how you go on, how you allow me to presume upon it. I may not always be able to resist the ardent desire I feel to seek your friendship."

"You speak in riddles, sir."

"I will explain; that is my object in coming. You are young, generous, and ready of access. It would be easy for a man who knows the world, like myself, to entice you into an intimacy, which would be a source and a delight to myself. We should almost inevitably glide into something like it, being near neighbors, if I did not caution you; and where that ill-starred love-affair ran its course. I could not help inquiring after her."

"Because—because—I am unworthy to be an associate or a friend of yours."

"I cannot believe that, Mr.—"

"Wallrade is my name."

"Mr. Wallrade, I have wished to know you for some time."

"You will wish it no longer, when you know what I am."

"I have heard of you, and have heard nothing to your disadvantage."

"You will know anything of my antecedents. I reveal them to you for a safeguard. I am a man—who has been tried for theft—and convicted."

Reginald stared as if he thought the respectable-looking, elderly man had suddenly gone mad.

"Perhaps no more than one or two in Great Britain know the fact. It is nevertheless true."

"You astonish me, Mr. Wallrade."

"If you have time, I will tell you something of my life."

Reginald signified his desire to hear it.

"It is some thirty-five years ago that I was tried, as I told you; it was soon after I came to live in London. I was in pressing need of money, on an emergency that admitted of no delay."

"I called upon the friend who belonged to my regiment—for I had enlisted as a soldier—to borrow a few guineas. He was absent. In haste and desperation I opened his escritoire and took out ten pounds, leaving a note to say I had borrowed it and would soon pay it back. I was gone some days, and when I returned, I found the regiment in a ferment. The robbery had been discovered, and the servant of my friend was in prison, charged with the theft."

"But your note—"

"I left it in the desk. I always thought the man suspected had afterward opened the desk for nefarious purposes; and had got the papers into confusion. I was stunned by this turn of affairs. The prisoner had insisted that he saw me leaving the escritoire; and, before I could see how to make matters straight, I was summoned for examination. My confession availed nothing; I was remanded for trial; tried and convicted, as I told you."

"On your own confession?"

"Chiefly the friend of the bank-notes, the numbers of which were marked, were identified and traced to me. I was sentenced to the punishment of theft, but my friend, who had all along been confident of the truth of my statement, and had suffered terribly from the prospect of my going to prison, had been indecisive in my behalf. He obtained a pardon for me."

"A pardon! a poor compensation for the brand of crime!"

"So I thought; and I resolved to leave the country. I could not live in England with a sullied reputation; and my reckless impatience had deserved some punishment. My friend procured me a clerkship in a mercantile house and I went to India."

"And this was all?" exclaimed Reginald.

"We were not guilty of crime. There is no reason why you should shun the association of honorable men, on account of that early indiscretion."

He grasped Wallrade's hand with a cordial pressure. The old man drew one hand across his eyes, as he proceeded:

"I will finish my outline; and then you can judge. In the midst of my trouble, one lovely lady, who learned my misfortune, took pity on me. It was owing to her intercession that my friend was able to procure the pardon; and her gentle influence raised up those who cared for me. She was a lady of rank; she bore an honored name; she was far above me; but I vowed a vow in my inmost heart, that for her sake I would devote my life to a life of useful labor."

"It was a noble resolve."

"She gave me her miniature before I left England; see, I have it here, fastened to my watch."

He drew out a small locket of fine wrought gold, depicting a slender girl clad in a white dress.

It opened with a spring. The face disclosed was that of a beautiful and very young girl. Reginald examined it with much interest; for the features were strangely familiar to him.

"I see what you are thinking of; you are mistaken. There was no love in the case. The lady—she was very young—almost a child—pitied me as the angels pity the doomed; I worshipped her as a patron saint. Years afterward I heard of her marriage to a noble lord; and I ventured to send from India a rich shawl, manufactured for a princess—of which I begged her acceptance."

"I served my employers well; I was made a partner; I became rich. My blight was unknown; I was esteemed among all who knew me. I found the acquaintance of one young Englishman of noble family, who was in the army; but compelled to leave it on account of failing health. I nursed him through a severe illness; and he persuaded me to accompany him to England, when he was ordered home."

"Who was he?"

"His name was Egbert Vane. We made the voyage together; at least part of it; for the ship was wrecked, and most of those on board perished."

"You were dreadful! You both escaped?"

"It was upon a hidden reef that we had been driven. I was swept into the sea when the ship went to pieces; but I managed to grasp a few loose spars, and tied them together with some cordage I got from the wreck. I had just done so, when a strong wind rose, and a drowning man was swept within reach of my hands; and I clutched him by the hair. I dragged him upon the raft; he was insensible, but I brought him to with a few drops of brandy, and a little chaffing."

"Then I bade him secure himself to the raft. Not till morning dawned, did I know whom I had saved. It was Egbert Vane."

"Providential, indeed."

"I will attempt no description of our experience, driven by wind and wave far from the sight of men, without provisions, on a frail raft. We looked only for death; but we were destined to live. On the fourth day a vessel picked us up, in a state of exhaustion nigh to death."

"Again providential!" exclaimed Reginald, deeply interested.

"It was a German vessel, bound to a German port. We were landed, but poor Egbert was too ill to travel far. I was again his nurse, and when he was well enough, we went into the mountains for the benefit of his health."

"Who told me to call you heartless?"

"We were like brothers; but my companion soon found one whom he could love with a deeper and warmer love. She was very beautiful, but of humble birth."

"When I saw that Egbert was becoming attached to her, I remonstrated with him. I showed him that he could not honorably court a girl in her station. But he would not regard my warnings. The intimacy grew and continued, though the meetings of the two were concealed from me."

"Imprudent, certainly."

"At last I went to see the young girl, who lived with her mother at Kaiserswerth on the Rhine. I warned her against the danger; I felt for her unprotected situation; and I remembered how the love of her sex had succored me."

"How did she receive your caution?"

"With haughty courtesy; thanking me for my good intentions, but assuring me that she was able to take care of herself. Egbert discovered what I had done, and we had a quarrel."

"Such interference seldom avails much."

"I reproached him, and he did not deny that he meant never to give up the maiden. He attributed to jealousy all I had done. Thus we parted in angry foreboding."

"What did he do?"

"I never learned. I never cared to inquire. I went to another part of Germany, and thence came to England. Once, since, I have revisited the place where we spent so many months, happily in each other's friendship; and where that ill-starred love-affair ran its course. I could not help inquiring after her."

"What had become of her?"

"Both she and Egbert were dead. She had died first. His constitution, undermined in India, and shattered by the shock and exposure of the shipwreck, gave way gradually. I was taken to the spot where he had been buried."

"A sad termination to his romance! Was he not brought to his friends in this country?"

"Strange, it appeared to me, that he was not. They told me his brother had come over and was with him at the last. It may have been his preference to be buried near the girl he had so madly loved. I never knew. I heard, after I came to England, that both he and I—with all those in the ship on board of which we sailed from India—had been reported drowned. Three or four of the sailors had escaped in the long-boat, and brought the news."

"Thus you could begin life afresh."

"I could have changed my name; but I did not. My few remembered me after so many years. My fault was forgotten. I had my ample fortune, safe in the bank that held the deposits of my mercantile house. Only one amusement I suffered to become a pastime, and that has procured me the reprobation of the censorious. I have played now and then."

"Played—at cards?"

and thought. Home, food and rest would have been their one desire. But when the regular, measured bay changed to a rapid, continuous clangor, the lads turned the horses free to find their own way home, and grasping their never absent rifles, started away in the direction of the chase.

Experience told them that the old hound was after no plebeian game, and they knew, too, that he was running by eye, rather than by scent alone.

Ere they had run two hundred yards, there came a fierce yelping cry, a snarl, the sounds of a sharp if short scuffle; then, at brief intervals, the excited bark of the old hound.

They knew that the game had turned to bay, that old Hector had dashed in and been safely recovered, and that he was now calling for help to rescue the quarry he had brought to a standstill. A noble stag, a huge timber wolf, or some nobler game; if anything less awaited them, the hound would never have been driven off once he had closed with it.

If you are a true hunter at heart, you can imagine the emotions which swelled the bosoms of these lads, as they rushed forward at top speed; not unless.

They were too eager. The game heard their hasty footsteps and turned to seek safety at renewed flight, old Hector close upon its heels. Saul caught one glimpse of the long gray body as it glided across the open ground, and, throwing forward his rifle, made a snap-shot, fearing he would not get another chance.

At the sharp report, the animal leaped far ahead, as though fleeing from a pack of dogs, and the fresh blood upon the dry grass that his lead had not been entirely wasted, and the boys pressed on with renewed energy, guided by the excited yelping of the trusty old hound.

"Well, git him yet!" panted Saul. "He's takin' to the Split Hill, I'm most sartin."

"What was it? I couldn't see."

"A gray wolf, I reckon. Whalin' big one, though."

No more was said. A steady run of a mile, carrying a heavy rifle, is no easy task for a lad. Fortunately the road was near at hand. Once more old Hector sent up a series of rapid, excited yelpings. The game was brought to bay, driven to earth or else treed.

Split Hill was a natural curiosity, and doubly remarkable for being situated on a hill of a few feet high, split directly in half, from apex to base, and one portion of it entirely obliterated, leaving the other moiety a solitary monument upon the level sandy plain. The cliff thus formed was of almost solid rock, not even a vine clinging to its face. The rounded side was tolerably well covered with stunted trees, bushes and vines.

From the extreme summit of this curious elevation came the excited voice of old Hector, and without pausing for breath or to calculate the danger they might be running, the brothers scaled the hill. A genuine surprise awaited them.

The apex was crowned by one huge, bushy-topped tree, the gnarled trunk of which was so bent that the limbs drooped far over the rocky precipice. Old Hector was standing with his forefeet festing against the trunk of this tree, his blazing eyes riveted upon the dense foliage above and beyond. The game was treed, beyond a doubt, for, as they drew near, the boys both heard a low growling sound, and the animal was retreating still further into the leafy cover.

"But wolves can't climb a tree!" exclaimed David, sorely puzzled.

"This one kin, but maybe 'tain't a wolf," returned Saul, scratching his head dubiously. "I don't see how we're goin' to git at him, though."

It was now dusk and rapidly growing dark. The thin rim of the new moon would soon disappear. Their keenest glances could not discover the animal.

"We kin build a fire," suggested David. "Ain't got no matches," but David produced two, and five minutes later the bright blaze was leaping high above the pile of brush. From every side the boys endeavored to catch a glimpse of the strange animal, but in vain. Still Saul would not give up. "You go home an' git somethin' to eat, Dave. Take old Hec. along. Mother'll be skeered to stay all by herself. She'll do the chores for once. You come back, an' we'll watch ontel day. We'll hev pay for this long run, ef it takes a week."

David willingly agreed, though Hector was very reluctant to abandon his quarry. An hour later the lad returned, bearing an ample supply of food.

The brothers settled down beside the fire, eating, talking and watching for some signs of the strange animal. For an hour or two all went well enough, but then their eyelids grew heavy with sleep. They had been hard at work since early dawn, and growing boys must sleep at all hazards. What followed was natural enough. Before ten o'clock the brothers were sound asleep, nor did they awaken until broad daylight.

And then—their game was gone! They could see where it had leaped from the trunk to the ground, its long claws deeply scoring the earth, not a dozen feet from where they had been sleeping! Why had it not attacked them? That was a question they could not answer.

They longed to follow the trail, but that was out of the question. Their day's work must be done, and that they set about it without a murmur, in their opinion, goes far to prove their merit to the title I have given them.

For nearly a week nothing more was heard or seen of the strange animal. One of the neighbors, a mighty hunter in his younger days, to whom the boys told the story of their adventure, and who took the trouble to visit Split Hill to examine the tracks, declared that the creature was none other than a panther of the largest size. He grew pale when he thought of the boys' escape so easily, especially as the animal was wounded. Their escape was one in a thousand.

The widow and her sons had gone to bed early, after a hard day's work, but early in the night they were awakened from sleep by a hideous clamor. Old Hector was yelping furiously. The fainting howl was squealing fit to cut its throat. The horses were snorting and kicking as though they meant to demolish their rude stable.

Saul and David, half-asleep, scrambled down from the loft where they slept, and grasping their rifles, opened the door and rushed forth. As they ran around the corner of the house, shouting encouragement to the hound, they caught a glimpse of something just leaping out of the pig-pen, but before they could lift a weapon, the prime cause of all this nocturnal disturbance ran nimbly up the old live-oak tree which formed one corner of the stable. It crouched in the lowest fork, glaring at them with fire in its eyes.

"It's that old painter!" and as he spoke, Saul endeavored to draw a bead upon the animal. It was too dark for him to see the sights, and now that he knew how dangerous the creature was, he dare not risk an uncertain shot.

"Tell mother to fetch the lantern," he muttered, to David.

This was the scene I beheld, as, belated, I neared the cabin. A tall, handsome woman in a night-dress and barefooted, holding a lantern so that the light fell upon the leveled rifles of her sons.

As one report the weapons spoke, and with a screech of mortal pain, the huge panther shot through the air and hurled the little group aside. But that leap was only spasmodic; both bullets were buried in the brain of the beast, and no person was hurt.

I helped to skin the creature, which measured nine feet seven inches from tip to tip, and weighed two hundred and fifty odd pounds. I spent a week at the farm, and I learned to love the boys as my own kindred. I am happy to add that, at this writing, they are fairly comfortable in this world's goods, all of which they have earned, like true heroes, by the sweat of their brow.

THE NIGHT-TIDE.

BY A. W. BELLAW.

Oh, Night, thy touch is kindly laid
Upon the fevered lids which weep,
And straightaway they close down in sleep,
And all their rainy tears are staid!

Thou breathest into the mourner's heart
The tender blessing of thy breath—
The dear tranquillity of death
Wherein their peace comes back in part

The hearts of good that war with ill,
The hearts of ill that war with good,
Strifeless and passionless are subdued,
Put on thy mantle and are still.

Come softly and come fairly:
Welcome and come, oh, Night, so dumb!
With star and comet, welcome and come
And veil the fire that is in me!

Make dark my sight till I forget
The wrong around me; let me sleep,
Forgetful, till the morning creep
Millennial-like on my regret!

Happy Jack;

OR,

The White Chief of the Sioux.

A ROMANCE OF SPORTS AND PERILS OF POST AND PLAIN.

BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A LIFE FOR A LIFE.

PLACING implicit confidence in his scout, who had returned and reported that the way was clear and open, Colonel Markham led his men squarely into the trap set for him by the White Sioux, suspecting nothing until that ringing whoop filled the air—until rifle and pistol united in one withering volley, moving down horse and rider in one hideous swath. And without giving the ambushed soldiers time for breath, the White Sioux led his braves to the charge, and white men and red joined in a fierce, merciless death-grapple.

High above the devilish clamor rung the voice of the White Sioux, and bold though he undeniably was, Colonel Markham shuddered as he heard the words commanding the savages to capture, not slay him. Right well he knew what that foreboded, and as the tall form of the white Indian slowly fought its way toward him, he emptied the chambers of one revolver in swift succession, and as his dreaded foe staggered back and fell, a hoarse shout of triumph broke from his lips.

With the fall of their chief, the Sioux braves seemed to lose a portion of their fire and impetuosity, and the soldiers, with a united effort, succeeded in cutting their way through the ranks. For a few moments it bade fair to become a hot retreat, for the deadly surprise had greatly magnified the numbers of their foes, but dashing through the crowd of fugitives, Colonel Markham succeeded in rallying them. Even in that hour of intense excitement, the thought of his daughter outweighed all else.

Ten minutes later the party was collected near the foot of the steep rock-wall, the officers consulting upon the best course for them to pursue. The council was of brief duration. Bull and muffled, yet unmistakable, there came the sound of fighting—Leaph's assault upon the outlaws in Hollow. For one instant the soldiers listened, breathlessly. Then Dr. Hurlbutt spoke, pointing to the rock-strewn space before them.

"The question is settled for us, gentlemen!" Leaping from cover to cover, numerous dusky forms could be distinguished by the growing daylight. In order to leave their present position, the whites would have to run the gantlet of more than a score of rifles. A single glance showed Markham that, though his force was still the strongest, numerically, owing to the advantage of cover, any attempt to break through that line would be little short of suicide. There was but one chance for them, and that was untried.

"Dismount and form a corral with the horses!" he shouted, setting the example. The animals were securely bound, two and two, in the form of a half-circle, either end resting against the perpendicular rock. A taunting yell came from the Sioux, and stealing closer, a few of the braves opened fire upon the living barricade. Two horses fell, then another, their dying struggles threatening to stampede the remainder.

Colonel Markham called several of his men by name and directed them to try and silence the savage marksmen, while the remainder, under his lead, began loosening the gravelly soil with their sabers and throwing it up in the form of a breastwork.

The sun peeped over the hilltop, and found all busily engaged. The Indians were still keeping up a galling fire, though as yet their bullets had found no nobler victims than a half-score horses. The soldiers still labored at the trench, now making quite a respectable appearance, for, as the horses fell, they were promptly lassoed and dragged into position to form a part of the breastwork.

There came no further sound from Black Hollow, and Colonel Markham feared the worst. Strange as it may appear, though, when dying, that fact reassured him. One of the braves at Black Hollow—and dead—he believed the one part, while ignoring the other. He felt that his child was alive—but now, he feared, in the hands of the ruthless Sioux. He flung his whole powers into the work, and performed more than any two men under his command, but he could not smother that sickening fear.

Suddenly the scattered shots from the enemy became a long, rolling fusillade, and believing that this covered some important movement, Colonel Markham called to his men to cease work and stand ready to repel a charge. But not an Indian could be seen, and their positions were only indicated by the sharp puffs of blue smoke as their rifles were discharged.

One soldier pitched heavily forward, dead ere he touched the earth, shot through the brain. Another staggered back and rolled into the trench, with a sharp cry. Dr. Hurlbutt was beside him in an instant, forgetting all else in his professional zeal. This last man was Walt Obermeyer, one of the survivors of the fierce and sanguinary struggle at the stone fort in Crooked Valley.

Warned by this loss, Colonel Markham ordered his men into the trench, where they would at least be partially covered. As for himself, he seemed unconscious of danger, and stood beside his big white war-horse, seeking in vain for an enemy upon whom he might avenge the death of his soldiers.

As suddenly as it had opened, the fusillade ceased, and all was still without. Only for the rising clouds of hazy smoke, there was nothing to betray the proximity of an enemy.

Gradually the soldiers resumed their labors and continued them until quite noon, with only one interruption. As he stood watching, a sharp exclamation escaped the colonel's lips. A strong force of Indians were riding rapidly up the valley, but drew rein as a footman ran swiftly toward them. There appeared to be a brief interchange of words, then the new-comers dismounted, tethered their horses and disappeared among the bushes and boulders. Breathlessly Colonel Markham eyed them, looking for yet drearier to recognize his idolized daughter among them; but in vain. If there, she was kept hidden from his gaze.

"Better if we had charged them at first," muttered the surgeon, at Markham's elbow. "They outnumber us three to one now, with every advantage of position."

"How many men have we—fit for work?"

"Thirty-one, all told. Obermeyer is hard hit—dying, I fear," replied the surgeon.

Markham stared moodily before him. The prospect was black, indeed, and he could see no way out of the coils.

We can only wait and sell our lives as dearly as possible," he said, after a pause. "There's not enough horses to mount us all. We must fight the bloodhounds until help comes from the fort. Blake may grow uneasy at our prolonged absence, and send out a scout." But it was plain that the colonel had little hope of this possibility ever coming to pass.

"Look! what on earth—a white flag, by Jupiter!" exclaimed Hurlbutt, pointing to where a white cloth was moving to and fro above a black boulder.

It may be a trick, but you may as well answer it as not. As an answer, there can be no harm in giving. Give me your handkerchief—mine is red. Now go and see that the men are ready for anything that may turn up."

While hurriedly speaking, Markham was knotting the doctor's handkerchief upon the point of his saber. Lifting his arm, he answered the signal. Immediately a man arose from behind the black boulder, and bearing the flag of truce, boldly advanced toward the barricade. Markham started sharply, and his florid countenance turned ashy white. In the being before him he recognized the man whom he believed he had slain—his deadliest foe—the White Sioux!

With a violent effort he mastered his emotions enough to cry aloud, in a hoarse, unnatural voice:

"Halt! you are near enough. What is your wish?"

"You are Colonel Westley Markham?" came the words, clear and cold. "Good! and I am Leroy Temple!"

A cashed officer—a deserter—a murderer, traitor and rascal—yet he did well to cover his head with a flag of truce!

"There is one title you have forgotten," and the White Sioux laughed, metallically. "I am an avenger, as well as the rest. But let that pass. I did not come here to bandy epithets with you, but to offer you terms for the lives of your men."

"Proceed; you are growing quite interesting," sneered Markham.

"I have just seventy-two braves, fit for service, under my command, at present. You can see for yourself that their rifles command your position, and a very little reflection will show you that, if I say the word, they can pick you off one by one, without running the slightest risk themselves."

"If this is so, which I deny—why are you taking so much trouble? Why come here and beg for what is your own? Bah! your statements are contradictory."

"You wish to know why? That is easy told. A chance bullet might cut you off—and I am not ready to die yet."

Slowly these words were enunciated, and with such a deep, intense malignity that the soldier's heart grew cold as he listened. Right well he knew the meaning of his enemy. But his voice was steady when he replied:

"The life of one man for those of a score. Your men are at liberty to depart, but they must first surrender you into my hands," was the prompt response.

"You shall take your answer straight from the lips of me," and Markham laughed, shortly. "You have heard, boys; you are free to ride away, if you will only give me over to that fellow. Speak out—and speak freely!"

One loud yell of derision arose. Markham smiled grimly as he again faced the White Sioux.

"You have your answer. Go back to your red-skinned gods and say that we dare them to come and take us!"

The White Sioux made no answer in words, but waved the flag of truce high above his head. As though by magic a slender figure appeared upon the black boulder—the figure of a white girl—of Kate Markham, her arms stretched appealingly toward the spot where her parent stood. A bitter groan broke from the soldier's lips as he recognized his child, and realized how helpless he was to aid her.

"Man—devil!" he gasped. "Release her—let her go free, unharmed, and I will surrender—murder me, if you will, but spare her!"

"Your men may go free, but your life and her life belong to me," coldly uttered the chief. "Those are the only conditions I can offer. What white blood I have shed has been in the attempt to capture you. My hour has come at last, and you are helpless. I give you until sunset to decide. If you do not surrender yourself then, you will be bound to the rock upon which she stands, and burned to death!"

Without another word the White Sioux turned and strode rapidly toward his braves.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE DEAD ALIVE.

WITH the angry hissing of the venomous serpent filling his ear—with the cold, clammy coil resting upon his bare neck and shoulder—with the soft plop of earth crumbling beneath his feet, leaving him suspended by one arm, while the unconscious maiden hung across the other—there seemed no escape for Blackbird, the Sioux brave.

And in louder tones, came the wondering call from above, but Blackbird dared make no reply. He felt that the serpent was in readiness to strike—that the faintest sound, the slightest motion, would hasten the venomous blow. Those few moments were ages of horrible torture. The warrior who had stood face to face with death a hundred times, now turned sick at heart and his veins seemed filled with ice instead of blood.

"What in thunder's the matter down there?" repeated the voice from above, and the tightly-stretched lasso was shaken impatiently.

The shock was too much for the cramped and stiffening fingers of Blackbird, and he slipped from his precarious foothold, falling swiftly several feet before he could check his descent. His foot struck against a small pile of rock, and he stood ready to repel a charge. But not an Indian could be seen, and their positions were only indicated by the sharp puffs of blue smoke as their rifles were discharged.

He heard the angry *skirr* below him, and firmly clutching the lasso, he called to his companion to draw him up. Though slowly, this was accomplished without further accident, and then Blackbird sunk down upon the narrow ledge breathless, almost fainting after his silent but awful struggle against death.

In silence, though evidently not a little puzzled, his comrade bent over him for a few moments, then turned to the unconscious maiden lying at his side, and removed the gag from her mouth, though holding his broad palm in readiness to smother any outcry she might attempt to make when she awoke to a sense of her position.

A moment later came the muffled but unmistakable sound of firing and wild yells from beyond the eastern rock of wall. Blackbird sat up, echoing back the cry of astonishment that broke from the lips of his comrade.

"It's from the outside, maybe it's the boys the fort, got wind of this hole—they've run chuk into a hornets' nest!"

"Hist! those bounds are awakened below! Not a word—watch and listen!" muttered Blackbird.

The sounds of fighting seemed to recede, and grew fainter and less distinct until the busy hum from the outlaws' camp below was the only sound that rose above the bawling of the impetuous river. The camp-fires were blazing up brightly, and from the little niche in the narrow ledge, where the two men crouched, the movements of the excited outlaws were distinctly visible.

"What kin be keepin' them red-skins' impatiently muttered the white man. "Lord!

what a clean sweep they could make, now! Look—quick! by the big fire—it's that Ben Watson, by the Eternal!"

Without another word, Bill Comstock—for the reader has already recognized him—grasped the lasso and slid down the hillside, just as Leaph, the Sioux, broke cover and struck his foe.

With breathless interest Blackbird watched the struggle that followed, his eyes riveted upon the huge form of Baby Tom, his heart beating with the hope that he might see the terrific death-struggle which ended in the fall of the giant. As the dying gladiator fell, an unconscious sigh parted his lips, and was answered by a low, gasping cry close beside him. Kate Markham had recovered her consciousness, but she could not move, for she was held by all that had befallen her.

Blackbird quickly but gently placed his hand over her lips, hurriedly muttering:

"For the love of God, lady, do not scream! our lives depend upon your prudence!"

Thured their plan. Every precaution which the shrubbery and was reflected from his rude and bronzed form. A look of sickening despair filled the maiden's eyes. Blackbird read the meaning of that expression, and spoke, quickly:

"I am a friend, Miss Markham—I risked my life to rescue you from the hands of those men. I do not wonder at your failing to recognize me in this disguise. Surely you can trust me—I am Happy Jack, your friend!"

When John Markham—or Happy Jack, as he was better known—brought his hands to Lieutenant Blake for the hands of Leaph, the Sioux, was led forth to die the death of a convicted murderer—when he made his last request of Colonel Markham, that after death his body might be handed over to Bill Comstock for burial—when he stood beside his coffin and bade the file of soldiers send their bullets home to his heart—when he bade Dr. Hurlbutt, as a final message, to proclaim that he died with his soul unstained by the crime for which he had been condemned to death—up to that moment Happy Jack had the faintest hope of being living through that hour. He had composed his mind for death. He believed it to be inevitable—and yet he lived.

All the time he had spent in schooling himself to meet death as a brave and innocent man should, true and faithful friends were working steadily and deliberately for his life. Prominent among these was Dr. Hurlbutt and Sergeant Bowen. Believing him innocent, despite the overwhelming if circumstantial evidence, the moment sentence was pronounced, they began making their plans. Every precaution was observed. Not even Bill Comstock was taken into their confidence at first. They knew he could not keep the secret from Happy Jack, and they feared that, if he knew what they intended, long enough beforehand, he would refuse to play his part.

Not until a few hours before that appointed for the execution, did Comstock have the glad tidings imparted to him. On pretense of taking him along while he went to "cuss the old man" for his way through the guard-house and told him all, keeping a close watch over him lest he should betray the plot in his insane joy. But Bill proved himself a better actor than the surgeon had given him credit for. Having full confidence in Martin, he calmly and coolly followed him, and together they rigged up a condemned ambulance, in which to carry off the pretended corpse.

Sergeant Bowen, to whom fell the duty of preparing the firing party, did his work well. It was not hard work to select men who were ready to run the necessary risk for Happy Jack, who was an almost universal favorite. Even those who believed he had slain Captain Stone, openly grumbled at the death sentence being passed upon a man who had simply rid the army of a dangerous nuisance.

The sergeant was far too old a soldier to fall into the error of having his men load with blank cartridges. He knew that, even in the excitement of an execution, any practiced ear could easily detect the wide difference between a blank cartridge and one loaded with a ball. Selecting reliable, steady-nerved men, he gave them orders to load regularly, but to aim so that their bullets would just miss the scout, upon the left. By so doing, even the sharpest-eyed spectators, seeing the dust raised by the bullets, could not tell that they had not passed through the scout's body, instead of past, owing to their position.

The reader will remember that Dr. Hurlbutt spoke a few rapid words to Happy Jack as he stood beside the coffin, which produced a marked difference in the him to demonstrate. Those words told him what was about to be done, and bade him remember that on his acquiescence rested the fate of his friends, as well.

"Live to solve the mystery of Stone's murder—live to clear your own name!" concluded the surgeon, stepping aside.

The volley was fired. Happy Jack fell as though dead. Stooping over him Dr. Hurlbutt emptied a small bottle of blood inside the scout's shirt, slipping the bottle into his own breast, then, as he stood, he pronounced the man dead. It was to prevent a too close scrutiny that he flung the blanket over the prostrate figure, the moment he felt that the spreading blood was noticed; and this dread also accounted for the desperate manner in which Bill Comstock guarded the scene—he led him to demonstrate, the eyes of the dazed and conscience-stricken father.

In the ambulance Happy Jack was conveyed to the valley where Emora was waiting. Then came her part. By her advice Happy Jack allowed himself to be disguised as an Indian. He had his bed him to his brother, telling him that these two men were those who had preserved her honor, if not life. Assuming the name of Blackbird, Happy Jack accompanied the Sioux to Black Hollow, resolved to rescue Kate—his half-sister—if mortal man could. Stealing away after his rebuff by the White Sioux, he and Comstock scaled the hill and entered Black Hollow, with the result already stated.

All this the scout told Kate, as they occupied the niche together, concealing nothing.

"I could not bear that you should think me dead, or guilty of this crime," he added. "I swear by the soul of my dead mother that I am innocent! That is all I care to live for now—I mean—"

"I do believe you—I know you—could not be so wicked," said Kate, softly. "But it is so strange! I never knew that I had a brother living. And yet—when I first saw you, I felt drawn toward you—it must have been the voice of Nature."

"And I to you," interrupted Jack, his voice not so steady as usual. "But with me it was different—I said in my heart that it would be like heaven to gain one look of love from those eyes."

In this moment the sharp crack of a rifle sounded from below, and a bullet sunk into the hill just above their heads. A loud voice came to their ears, and glancing downward, Happy Jack discovered several dusky forms staring upward, threatening him with leveled rifles. Thoroughly conversant with the Sioux tongue, the scout had no difficulty in comprehending the summons. He was threatened with instant death unless he descended at once. A single glance showed him that escape was impossible. The niche was not deep enough to protect their bodies from rifle-shots below. Covered by the shrubbery, the Sioux could pick him off without running the slightest risk themselves.

"We must descend—but trust to me. I will contrive to baffle them, yet. Remember—I am a stranger—a Sioux warrior, to you. Be silent, but brave-hearted."

Calling forth his submission, Happy Jack assisted Kate down the hill, and joined the Sioux. At first they looked suspiciously upon him, but he laughingly recalled the words of their chief, offering a large reward to the brave who should fetch him the white squaw.

"We will share the reward," he said, laughing.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 414.)

Work and Play.

In the "parlor diversion" given in our WEEK AND PLAY department (No. 421) several errors occurred in the alphabet arrangement. Correct as follows: In 3d column the first Y should be U; in 4th column omit the W and change the Y to Z; in 5th column change Z to Y.

MOTHER says: "I live in the country, where we are restricted in the use of vegetables to those we raise in our own garden; and the times are so hard it seems necessary to use these, for canned vegetables cost so much. But my children complain that they get so tired of seeing the same things every day, that I thought I would ask you, who seem always ready to help people, to tell me how I can vary our bill of fare a little, and if there are any new ways of cooking the plain, old standard vegetables?" Two, or at most three kinds of vegetables are quite enough to serve with meat at an ordinary dinner, with some kind of pickle for relish; sweet pickles are best with cold sliced meats; chow-chow, mixed pickles, gherkins, cucumbers, cauliflower, green tomatoes, or boiled beets in vinegar, are for hot meats; and spiced currants, berries, or grapes, or jelly, should be served with poultry and game. Tart apple-sauce is excellent with roast pork or beef, and cranberry-sauce relishes with pork or poultry. Potatoes should be served at every dinner, whole, with fish, roast pork, liver, chops, steaks, mashed, with lamb, mutton, roast beef, steaks, cutlets, poultry; baked with sausage, ham, cold meats; stewed, with game, poultry, meat-pies, etc. Whole potatoes should be neatly but thinly pared, boiled or steamed until thoroughly tender, salted just before removal from the water, and drained until dry and mealy. Potatoes with fish are often served with skins on. Baked potatoes should be free from lumps, and be moistened slightly with cream or milk and butter. Baked potatoes should be carefully washed, and the skins slightly buttered, previous to putting in the oven. To steam potatoes, pare and slice thin, cutting each round slice in half; boil a few minutes in water, then drain off nearly all the water and add milk, a lump of butter, salt, pepper, and a morsel of finely chopped parsley. Beets should be boiled until tender; skin, slice, and serve with melted butter over them; serve in little dishes. Peel and slice carrots; boil in water until tender, drain off the water and add a large lump of butter; serve in small plates. Peel parsnips, slice lengthwise and fry brown in beef gravy; or cut in fine round slices, and cook like carrots, or stewed potatoes, cold, in the pan. Apples pared and cored and cut in round slices and fried brown in butter make an excellent vegetable. Dried beans should be soaked until tender, boiled—without boiling into bits—and served with melted butter; Lima beans served thus are equal to green ones. Cabbage should be steamed or boiled tender, salted, and served, finely cut, with pepper and melted or drawn butter. Turnips and winter squash should always be served finely mashed. Cook dried peas, boil carefully, drain off water and finish in butter or milk. Macaroni is an excellent vegetable, also boiled rice. Sweet potatoes if boiled should be dried in the oven a few minutes before serving; they are excellent baked. Onions should be boiled whole in milk; sliced and fried in gravy, or fried with steak. White potatoes, peeled and baked in the pan with roast beef are nice. Canned tomatoes may be bought cheaply by the dozen or box, and are excellent stewed or used in soups. All vegetables, especially potatoes, should be served very hot. Never have the same vegetable twice in potatoes, two days in succession. All kinds of cold vegetables may be cooked over in a variety of ways for breakfasts or lunches.

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MY FIRST CALL.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

When first I called on Mary Jane
How well do I remember:
The night was white with moon and snow,
And it was in December.
I knocked; against my breast my heart
Was also loudly knocking;
She took me in and seated me,
And then I went to rocking.
At home they said I talked too much—
Indeed, they said, quite violent;
But there, with her, I found it was
Quite easy to be silent.
The clock ticked on the mantel-shelf;
My heart within me pattered;
But I said nothing but a cough—
My teeth were all that chattered.
I'd heard that they who talk too much
Are oft considered brittle,
And consequently you'll believe
That I conversed but little.
I marked the pictures on the wall,
And brushed my brain new clothing;
I saw that something I must say,
And learnedly said—nothing.
The party on the night before!
A subject good! I'd try it!
I took a very long breath in
And then—sat very quiet.
The snore, ah, there was just the theme
I had been vainly seeking!
I vowed I would begin at once,
And sat there without speaking.
Sedately sitting there I saw
My shoes must be mended;
I marked their shape, and then their size—
A little too extended.
I thought how sweet was Mary Jane;
My thoughts were all unspoken;
I saw that it was nine o'clock—
The silence was unbroken.
The household cat before the fire
Serenely dozed and slumbered;
I somehow wished I was the cat
With not a care incumbent.
I had a sentimental heart
Which was quite stuffed with feeling;
I counted spots upon the floor,
Then looked up at the ceiling.
I could not think just what to say,
And thought my wits were straying;
My feet, too many then, I crossed,
And Mary was crocheting.
I felt a thousand miles from home;
I looked and saw me gazing;
It made me more than ever still;
My cheeks, I felt them blazing.
I saw that peaceful visit was
Unspoiled by any talking.
I'd naught to say and far to go,
And thought I'd best be wailing.
I took my hat, and said good-night—
I very boldly said it,
And proudly felt I had not spoke
One word that I regretted.

The Diamond-Hunters;
OR,
ADRIFT IN BRAZIL.BY C. D. CLARK,
AUTHOR OF "FLYAWAY AFLOAT," "YANKEE
BOYS IN CEYLON," ETC., ETC.

V.

ON THE BACK TRACK—THE JAGUAR HUNT.

THREE days later they entered the Indian country, where the Brazilians seldom dared to set their feet. They were soon in the Indian village, and were kindly received and feasted by the people, who had heard that the whites had fought valiantly by the side of Hualta and his men, and had showed that they were not ungrateful for the kindness of the chief in rescuing them from the hands of the soldiers.

But after remaining a few days, they held a consultation and called Hualta into the council.

"My brother," said Red Ruy, "you have been very kind to us, and we are not ungrateful, but your ways are not our ways, and we have friends who wait for us."

"My brother cannot go back to Rio," said the chief.

"No, Hualta; but in Montevideo I have friends, and my wife and little ones are there. They and their people look for our return."

"But if my brothers would stay with us the Guarinas would make them very welcome."

"It cannot be."

There was a sad look upon the face of Hualta, but he bowed his head.

"It is enough," he said. "My brothers shall go to their own land, but Hualta will set them on their way."

"We have something to do first. We must find a place where the shining stones which we call diamonds are hidden. The Guarinas do not care for them, but in our own land they will make us great. We must find them, even if we seek them in the midst of danger."

"Hualta can show you the place you seek," quietly replied the chief. "But the soldiers might come there and again make you slaves."

"We will take the chances, if you will show us the place."

"Let it be as you say," responded the chief. "I would not have you leave me; but if it must be so, Hualta is not the man to say no to your wishes. To-morrow we will go."

There was much real grief in the Guarina village, when, at early morning, the three whites, accompanied by thirty or forty warriors, set out upon their journey toward the diamond fields. They marched rapidly, but it was two days before they crossed the mountain range and entered the Mirvas Geras, the country in which diamonds most abound. They made their camp the first night in the mouth of a mountain pass, close to the place where they had their fight with the dragons.

"It is half a day's march to the river where the shining stones are found," announced the chief, "and the men of Pedro often come this way. I would not leave you in danger without warning."

"We have faced danger before, and it is worth a risk," replied Red Ruy. "Do not fear but we shall take good care of ourselves."

The chief saw that it was useless to waste words, and he at once gave up and set his guards for the night. All around them they could hear the cry of wild beasts, and these in great numbers. The bark of the wolf, the shrill cry of the cougar, and the peculiar yell of the jaguar, warned them that animals which were dangerous were prowling about the camp.

"I'd like to see a jaguar," declared Ned. "They say that they are almost as strong as tigers."

"My young brother shall see one," answered Hualta. "Let him take his fire-stick and go with me."

"Count me in!" cried Captain Ralph. "I wouldn't miss it for anything."

"Will you come, too, Red Chief?" the chief asked.

"No," replied Ruy. "Take good care of my two boys, chief."

Ralph and Ned took their rifles and followed the chief. It was a bright moonlight night, and objects were nearly as easily distinguishable as in the glare of open day. The chief strode on in silence, his only weapon being a stout spear, and carrying a sort of mantle thrown across his arm.

"I will show you how the Indians hunt the jaguar," he said. "The jaguar is brave, but the arm of the Guarana chief is strong."

"You are not afraid of them then?" queried Ned.

"A weak arm cannot lay the jaguar low," was the chief's reply. "When you see him you will know that I have not lied to you."

They passed on through the dim arches of the woods, the chief in advance, and at last came out in an opening in the forest where Hualta paused and signed to them to be silent. Then, raising his fingers to his mouth, he gave utterance to a low, plaintive cry, like that of a wounded deer. Ned started and looked around him, for it seemed to him that the animal was near at hand. Scarcely had the first note

sounded when the roar of some animal was heard in the forest, scarcely five hundred yards away.

"Lie down," ordered the chief, "and see how it is done."

The two white men dropped in the grass, but holding their rifles ready. Again the plaintive cry of the deer was heard, and once more the tremendous voice of the jaguar burst out; a crash was heard in the bushes, and some great animal came dashing through and landed upon the greensward within fifty feet of the place where the two hunters crouched, and for the first time they saw that terror of the South American forest—the jaguar.

It was a noble male, with a sleek, shining coat, the black and yellow contrasting beautifully in the light of the moon. The great eyes were blazing like spots of living fire as they were fixed upon the immovable form of the Indian. They saw Hualta, with a quick movement, fling the mantle about the left arm, while his right hand closed more firmly about the handle of the spear, and his eyes never left those of the jaguar.

The animal scarcely seemed to move, but lay upon the grass, his paws outstretched and only the tail gently waving to and fro, for the steady look of the brave Indian somewhat awed him. Ned, wildly excited, had great difficulty in restraining his desire to fire. His fingers closed convulsively upon the rifle-barrel, and once or twice he half lifted it, for it seemed to him that he could not wait for the rush of the noble beast. But the captain, who knew how impulsive his young friend was, laid a restraining hand upon the boy's arm.

They had not long to wait now, for they saw that Hualta had sunk upon one knee, and with his left arm extended made threatening gestures at the jaguar, while, at the same time, he uttered the warning cry which had called the creature to the place.

That seemed to end the hesitation of the savage beast. At once the yellow and black body rose into the air, and at a single bound he seemed to clear half the distance which separated him from the crouching form of Hualta. The Indian held the spear firmly clutched in his



And then joined they issue in a most desperate fight.

right hand, grasping it nearly in the center of the haft while it lay flat upon the earth.

Again the jaguar hesitated and again the plaintive cry of the wounded deer sounded upon the night air, and the form of the jaguar was seen in the air, in the act of leaping. Ned bounded to his feet, unable to endure more, and the heavy rifle sprang to his shoulder with a quick motion. But the captain, who saw that he could not fire without danger to the life of the Indian—who, still extending his arm toward the jaguar, continued his taunting gestures—dashed the rifle aside.

The last leap of the savage creature brought him face to face with the Indian—so close indeed that the extended hand almost touched the animal's head. Again the eyes met, and it seemed for a moment that the stern gaze of the Indian chief would cow the jaguar. But, as the menacing gesture was repeated, the jaguar sprang forward, and his strong teeth closed upon the cloth enveloping the arm of the Guarina.

Captain Ralph drew his revolver and sprang forward, but even in mid career he paused, for he saw that Hualta knew what he was doing when he thrust his arm into the open jaws of the American figure.

The creature, like the bulldog, never lets go his hold; so, drawing back his arm, he plunged the sharp-pointed spear into the broad breast of the jaguar, directing it with unerring certainty at the heart.

His aim was only too true, for the monster gave a convulsive bound which snapped the spear close to the hand of the chief, and left him wholly defenseless.

But he was not needed. Only one more spring the mad creature gave, and then fell in a heap, and rolled over on his side, dead.

"Well done, Hualta! Well done!" cried Ralph. "You have deserved well the name of chief. Only the bravest of men dare to wait for the rush of such a creature. Ha! look out!"

The warning came just in time, for the female jaguar suddenly leaped out of the bushes, and was seen making with great bounds toward the captain.

It was the mate of the slain jaguar coming to avenge his death.

The captain caught up his rifle, brought it to a level, and fired. The ball took, but was only answered by a fierce yell, and the creature continued its leap madly toward him. The captain hastily drew his revolver. Twice the weapon cracked, but it did not stop the enraged beast. The body of the creature seemed suspended in the air over the head of the brave captain, and the Indian was springing forward intending to assail the monster with naked hands, when the

crack of a rifle was heard and the jaguar was seen to turn completely over in the air, and came down upon the head of Captain Ralph, leveling him to the earth. But the next moment he shook off the huge body and rose, entirely unhurt, while Ned ran up with his rifle smoking in his hand. His shot had come just in time, and had doubtless saved the life of the captain.

An hour later they returned to camp, carrying in triumph the beautiful jaguar skins as tokens of their success.

At early morning they broke camp and marched away toward the unknown perils of the distant diamond-fields. Scarcely were they out of sight when there rose above the bushes the ugly face of Estevan Garcia! The villain was again upon their track!

(To be continued—commenced in No. 421.)

Gay Gomez's Wager.

A LEGEND OF OLD SPAIN.

BY COL. DELLE SARA.

"The Christians call upon Saint James,
The Moors upon Mahound;
There were twelve hundred slain,
All in that little plot of ground."

—OLD BALLAD.

OVER Granada's far-famed walls the Moorish banner waved, but closely circling it was the ancient town by the gaudy pennons of the knights of Leon, Castile and Aragon.

Ferdinand and Isabella had wedded, thus for the first time uniting all of Christian Spain under one government, and with determined sword the allied army had pursued the common foe, the insolent and overbearing Moor, who had, since the fatal battle, when doomed Roderick, on the banks of the Guadalete, saw his army melt away like snow before the sun, and the cross go down before the crescent, lorded it over the best part of Spain.

But, little by little, the Spaniards had gained

Following in their leader's track, the band rode to the south of the city, circled round it and then struck off into the interior; they paused not until three good leagues had been covered, and before them rose the dark turrets of a castle.

And then Gomez commanded a halt; the soldiers reined in their steeds; the young Spaniard beckoned Pedro to follow him, and then the two leaders rode forward out of earshot of the troopers.

Torrejón instantly guessed that this mysterious castle, so isolated within the lonely valley, held the secret of the melancholy which had so strangely affected his friend.

"Know you yon tower?" Gomez asked.

"No."

"It is the castle of Miguel de Castro, Marquis de Cantara."

"I have heard the name; an old grandee long since retired from the world, and—if I remember rightly—he was possessed of a daughter beautiful beyond expression."

A deep sigh came from Gomez's lips.

"Ah, my friend!" he cried, "oft have I scoffed at love's wild, delirious passion, but then I had not seen Zarifa de Castro."

"That is the name of a Moorish maid, and not the fitting appellation for a Christian's daughter!" Torrejón exclaimed in astonishment.

"Her mother was a Saracen girl. Years ago the old knight quarreled with King Ferdinand, left the court in anger and allied himself with the Moors. He married a Moslem girl; but her child, thanks to a holy man who reared her, was brought up secretly in our faith. The old knight, now in his dotage, a short time ago resolved to give his child a husband ere he should depart this life, and in his madness he held a grand encounter-at-arms, the prize of which was the peerless Zarifa. Andalla was the victor—thou knowest the man, one of the bravest of the Moorish princes. By chance, riding this way, I came across the old friar who educated Zarifa; he told me her story, and introduced me to the lady. We saw and loved upon the instant. Her father has bound her by oath to wed the Moor, and so I ride by night trusting to

released Zarifa from her oath, and placing her hand within the Spaniard's bade her wed him. And so the soldier won his bride, and never in the after time, when years came thick upon him, did he regret the result of his battle beneath the moon, nor cease to prize the treasure that his wager won.

Such a Bargain.

BY MATTIE DYER BRITTS.

It was Saturday morning. A busy day, as all tidy housekeepers know. And in Mrs. Charley Grigg's cozy home busier than usual, for her hired girl had come home for a few days' visit to a sick mother, and all the household cares devolved upon little Mrs. Susie's own pretty shoulders.

However, she was quick and neat. The parlor and sitting-room and her own little bedroom were swept and dusted, all trim and tidy, at an early hour. She next turned her attention to bringing the dining-room cupboards and closets all into good order. The doors were all open, and the shelves in a state of disarray, when a rap came upon the dining-room door, which opened upon a side porch.

Expecting to see her next door neighbor, who often came that way, Mrs. Grigg opened the door. But, instead of her neighbor, she beheld a small, dark, swarthy man, who carried a huge pack upon his back, and a large basket of china and other ornaments upon his arm.

Without waiting for an invitation he popped his pack down upon the floor, and began to display his basket of wares, endeavoring with a voluble tongue to drive a bargain with Susie.

"I not ask no money," he said, in broken patois, "yat got some old cloz—one, two, three coats, yat de goot man not, never, no more wears! You gits him—I gif you de pretty vase, eh? You understand? Eh?"

Susie told him she understood, while her eyes were fixed upon a pair of very pretty Parian vases, which she greatly desired to own.

Money she could not spare just then. But she bethought herself of sundry old garments which hung up-stairs, and felt sorely tempted.

"I know he don't approve of my trading with peddlers," she thought, "but these vases are so pretty! And I do want them so badly! I don't believe Charley will ever need those old duds any more, either."

The result was, that Susie agreed to show her old clothes. The peddler sat down upon his big pack, and began to whistle merrily, while she went up-stairs to bring them down.

The merry whistle reached her ears all the time she was gone, and never stopped until she came down with the old coats and pants.

Then Mr. Peddler was all alive to making his bargain. He assured Susie that the vases were real Parian, and would cost her five dollars in any store, while he proposed to let her have them for half that price, and take his pay in the old clothes.

After a good bit of arguing on both sides the bargain was struck. Susie took the pretty vases and the peddler tucked Charley's clothes into his big pack, shouldered it, picked up his basket, and took a "new departure."

Susie carried her treasures into the parlor, disposed of them in the most conspicuous place, stopped a little to admire them once more, and then hastened to get dinner. But it was already so late that, though she hurried as fast as she could, Charley came in just as she was beginning to set the table.

"Hallo, little woman, seems to me you're behind the times to-day! Had callers?" was his greeting.

"Yes, I am a little late; I was hindered," answered Susie, "but I didn't have callers. That is, not exactly. There was a china peddler here, and I made such a bargain, Charley! Just come into the parlor and see!"

Charley followed her, and inspected the vases with a comical smile.

"I'll bet you gave him all the clothes I had in the world for them," he said.

"Oh, Charley, indeed I didn't! Only two or three old coats which you would never wear again! And they are real Parian, for he said so! It was such a bargain!"

"Shouldn't wonder if it was! But come, little woman, let's have dinner, some time. You're tired and hurried—I'll set the table for you, shall I?"

"Yes, if you please. Here's the cloth."

Charley had helped Susie before when she had no girl, so he went about setting the table as handsily as a woman. Presently he called out to her:

"I say, Susie, where are your spoons and forks?"

"Why, in their places, of course. Spoons in the holder, and forks and napkin-rings in the basket."

"Not as I can see," said Charley.

"But they must be!" insisted Susie. "I put them there this very morning."

"Come and see for yourself, then. Here's the holder, and here's the fork-basket, empty and forlorn."

"Why, Charley!" Susie came to the closet and looked in utter amazement, but Charley was right.

"Where do you keep your castor and cake-basket?" asked Charley.

"Oh, the third—Oh, Charley! My goodness gracious! they're both gone!" And Susie sunk, pale and breathless, into a chair.

"Sure enough!" And Charley gave a long, shrill whistle. "They're stolen, sure as a gun!"

"Why, who could have done it?" breathed Susie.

"Oh, that's clear enough! Was your peddler alone in the room here, this morning?"

"Ye-es—a little while. Only while I went up-stairs to get the old clothes. But, indeed, Charley, he sat down on his pack, right by the door, and I heard him whistling all the time. I was gone. I don't see how he could have done it."

"There was nobody else here?"

"Not a soul."

"And you have not been away from the house yourself?"

"Not a single moment."

"Oh! well, then, there's no use in looking any further for the thief. It was the peddler, of course. Though I hardly see how he could open and shut all the doors without your hearing."

"Oh, Charley! I was just beginning to clear up the closet shelves, (you know it is Saturday morning), and the doors were all open and things standing about when he came!"

"That explains it, then! Well, Susie, I think you did make such a bargain! You've lost about thirty dollars' worth of silver, and a lot of clothes which might, at least, have done some good for somebody poorer than ourselves, and you've got a pair of vases which I solemnly declare to you I could buy at any store in town for fifty cents! Such a bargain, with a vengeance!"

It was too much for poor Susie. The dinner was forgotten, and down she dropped upon a stool, covered her face with her apron, and burst into tears.

Then Mr. Charley, like the good husband that he really was, had to soothe her into quiet and assure her that he didn't mean to scold her, and was sorry for her, and all that.

And though Susie knew she had acted like a little simpleton, and deserved a good scolding, she didn't want to take it, and was crying as much at the thought of Charley's displeasure, as at the loss of her silver.

So, when she found he was not going to reproach her, she dried her tears, and begged him to find some way to catch the rascal.

But Charley knew he might as well try to catch the wind. He did make some inquiries, but they resulted in nothing. The silver, (most of it wedding gifts), was a dead loss.

But Susie had learned one lesson. It did not take her long to dismiss a peddler and lock the door in his face, after that.

And the very next week she gave the hateful little vases away to her washerwoman, just to get rid of the sight of such a bargain.